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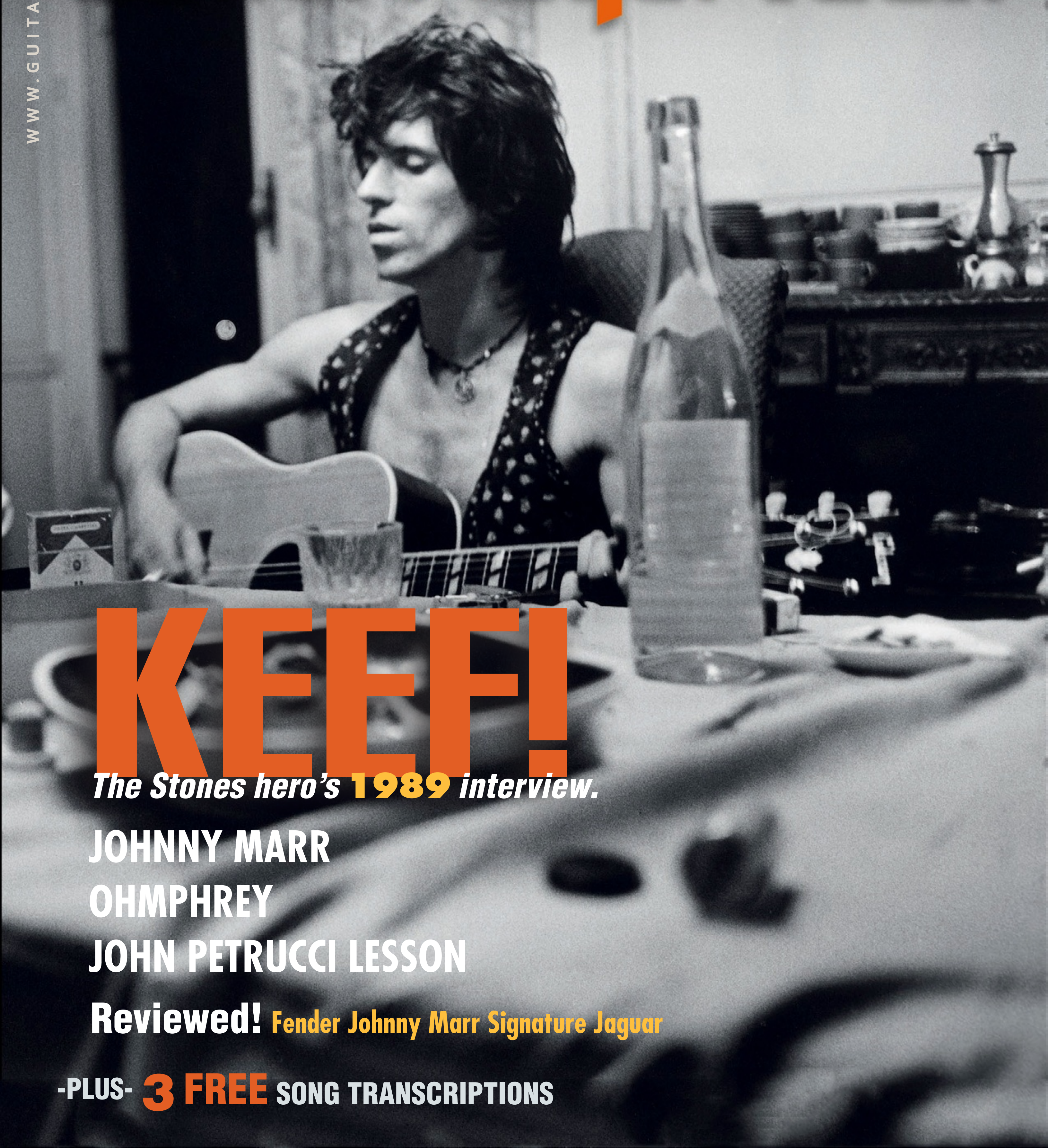

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Box 469073, Escondido, CA 92046.

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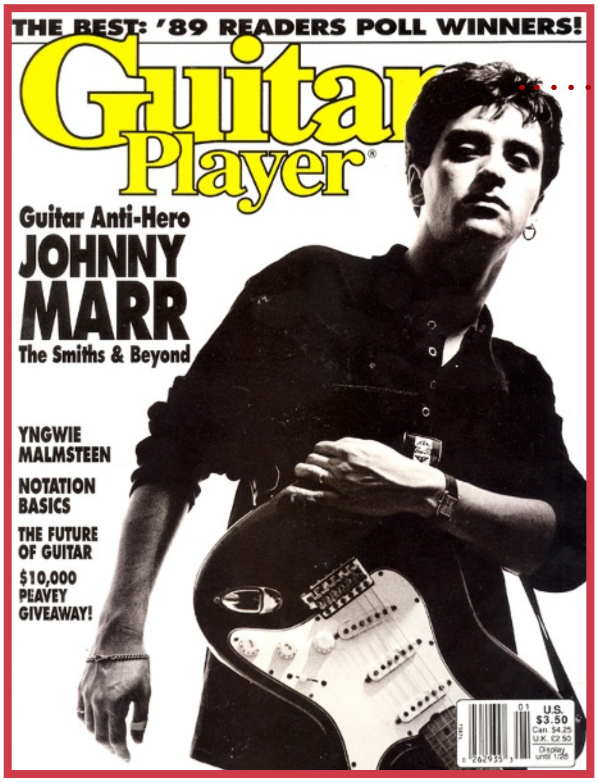
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The 18 strings of OHMphrey—(from left) Pag Pagliari, Jake Cinninger, and Chris Poland.

DAVE VANN

OHMphrey

BY MATT BLACKETT

"THIS RECORD WAS MADE A LOT LIKE THE OLD '70s fusion records: get a bunch of great players in a room and just go at it. We came in to the studio with no ideas and we manifested everything in the moment during the week that we recorded." That's how OHMphrey guitarist and Umphrey's McGee stalwart Jake Cinninger views OHMphrey's second album, *Posthaste* [Magna Carta]. As the name might very well suggest, the band is composed of some OHM guys and some Umphrey's guys. Cinninger, along with fusion maestro Chris Poland, 6-string fretless bass madman Robertino "Pag" Pagliari, keyboardist Joel Cummins, and drummer Kris Myers crank out mostly improvised tunes that sound surprisingly composed, creating a stew of jazz, rock, funk, metal, blues, reggae, and more, with astounding guitar solos sprinkled liberally throughout.

Can you describe your guitar roles in this band?

Poland: I do a lot of legato. I do a lot of whole-note pad stuff. I like sound effects. Jake is originally a drummer so his right hand is like a machine. He's a very staccato player and he takes care of all that stuff that I just wouldn't even really know how to do. I don't even know if I could physically do it. I know this is a really broad stroke here, but I can compare us to Dickey Betts and Duane Allman. Dickey Betts was a very staccato player and Duane Allman was a very legato player. Not that we sound anything like them, but that was the first thing that came to mind.

Cinninger: Chris is a little bit more on the slippery, legato, Jan Hammer side of things when it comes to soloing. I do more of an Al Di Meola, Tommy Bolin picky kind of thing, using a little more of my right hand. It's a nice pairing of two styles.

For a band with such amazing technique, there sure is a lot of space in these tunes.

Poland: That's what's so great about the band. Between Jake, Kris, Pag, and myself, everybody is always listening—listening to what they should and shouldn't do, when to lay out, and when to be on. I think that's the secret ingredient: We want it to be open like that so it's not just a bunch of gobbledygook.

Cinninger: Because we only had a week to record and come up with these songs, that kept everything in its infant state. We didn't have time to add too much to the songs because we had to get this done. It sounded so great and open.

The new record starts out pretty heavy with "Devil's in

the Details." How did that song come together?

Cinninger: That particular song was left until the end of the session. I had an idea of recording a bunch of small snippets and messing around with them later in Pro Tools. So we came up with 25 different little riffs and recorded them all at the same tempo to a click track with the plan that later we could splice them together and make this crazy montage of riffs. When it was done it really spoke to us, so we decided to start the whole record off with that one.

Poland: Basically Jake told Kris, "This many beats per minute and we're just going to keep doing idea after idea after idea." I came up with all these wannabe Megadeth-style riffs and I was just having fun. It turned out we used a lot of them. I think it took all of 20 minutes to lay down all the tracks. Then Jake and Manny Sanchez went back to Chicago and basically cut and pasted the whole thing together and made a song out of it.

The angular breakdown that comes in around 5:15 has some really interesting note choices.

Cinninger: That was a total Frank Zappa mentality. We took a sentence, something like, "You should eat carrots, they are really good for you," and we just played that sentence on our instruments in random notes. We recorded that 30 times and chose the best ten or so. We wanted to see what we could get out of almost nothing. It's like doing the old Beatles thing—chop up the tape, throw it up in the air, and see what you got later. Some almost sounded like chords. It was like they were meant to happen, but it was a complete freak of nature.

Poland: I wasn't even in the room when they started it. I heard them play it and I ran inside really quick and got my two cents in. I knew what they were going for. Let's just freak out and then we'll see if it works, and it did. That's the thing about jamming. It's just a magic that you can't

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The whole record sounds very live. You've mentioned some Pro Tools edits, but how much punching in and overdubbing did you do on this album?

Cinninger: We didn't go back and overdub anything, actually. As far as the solos and everything like that, everything was taken from live takes in the studio. So when Chris nailed a solo and mine was next, I knew I had better get a good one! It's like the Billy Cobham *Spectrum* record or all the old Tommy Bolin stuff. They just grabbed the best take, and that's the way we did it.

Poland: It's so nerve-wracking. You're thinking, "Okay, don't blow it." When you're there, you know when it's the take. I swear the hair on your head stands up. I think there is only one punch on the whole record, something that Jake did in Chicago that kind of sounds like a sequencer. When I heard it I thought, "I don't even know how he's doing that. I'm listening to it and thinking, "That's his drummer thing. He's basically playing drums on his strings right now." I don't know anybody else who could have done that.

You both are pretty bold with your use of effects on this record. What gear did you rely on?

Cinninger: The beauty of living today is that guitar effects sound better than ever. I still love those straight-into-a-Marshall tones but I think for a futuristic metal/fusion/jazz/rock thing, we had to have a few effects in there. I used my little fly pedalboard, which has a Boss Delay, Boss Flanger, and a Bad Horsie Wah. I'm pretty simple. Chris and Joel are more the pedal effect-y ones. For guitars, I didn't play my G&Ls. I was playing one of Chris' Yamaha SBGs into a new Line 6 amp. It was something we had rented for a few live shows at the Baked Potato. I just found a nice Fender-y sound, ran my pedals in front of it, and it seemed to work. I just plug in and let the hands do all the work at the end of the day.

Poland: Obviously I have the big rack. Jake had like five pedals and even though he's just using stuff that everybody in America owns, he was coming up with unique stuff. I use a 1210 TC Chorus, and one thing I did on this record was make sure that if they only used one side of it, that it wasn't the side that has that weird kind of out-of-phase chorus that it does when you don't have both sides up. Then if they were just panning hard left, hard right on the guitars, at least my guitar had a little bit of wobble on it but it wasn't going to be crazy and weird. For amps, I was using the red face Egnater, the IE-4. I think it's one of the first 50 he made or something like that. I run it into a 25-year-old Engl 2x100 tube power amp. It's all EL 34s and it's the best sounding power amp I've ever heard.

What can do from a guitar standpoint in OHMphrey that you can't do in the other bands you play with?

Poland: You know what the beauty of OHMphrey is? I can actually sit down and think for a second. There are enough players in the room that I can lay out at times. In a three-piece format, you're always thinking two seconds ahead. You're always on. But with Jake and Joel there to fill up space, I can actually sit there and say, "What can I do now to complement this section or this moment?" I don't get that luxury with OHM.

Cinninger: I would say I can cut loose a little more in this band. With Umphrey's there's a particular sound I'm going for—a little more of a "light-hearted, cover as many styles as possible" thing. With OHMphrey, I can take a little bit more of a gunslinger approach. It's a real guitar-heavy thing, so I can really step forward and blaze as hard as possible. It's fun.

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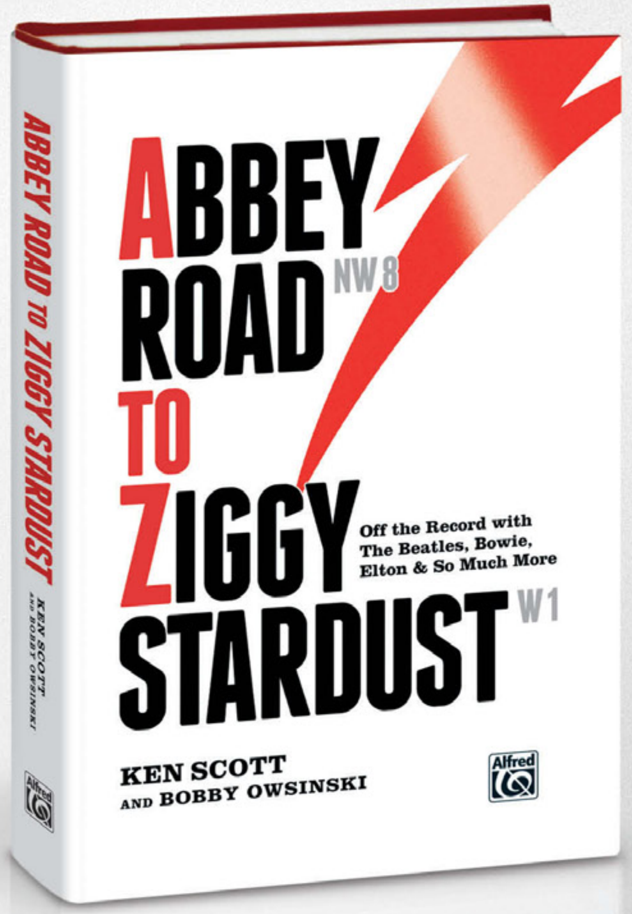
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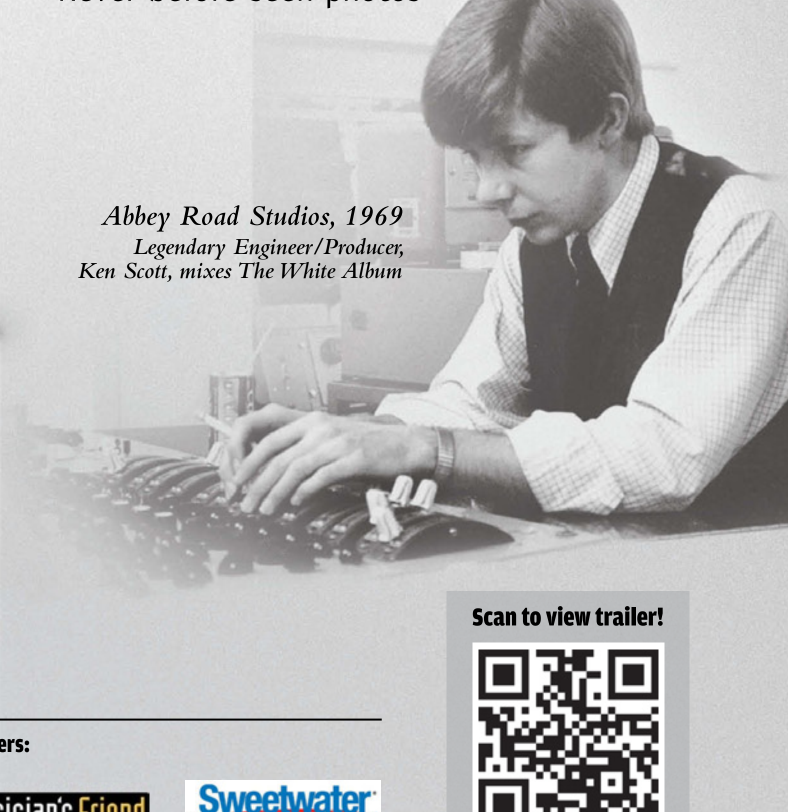

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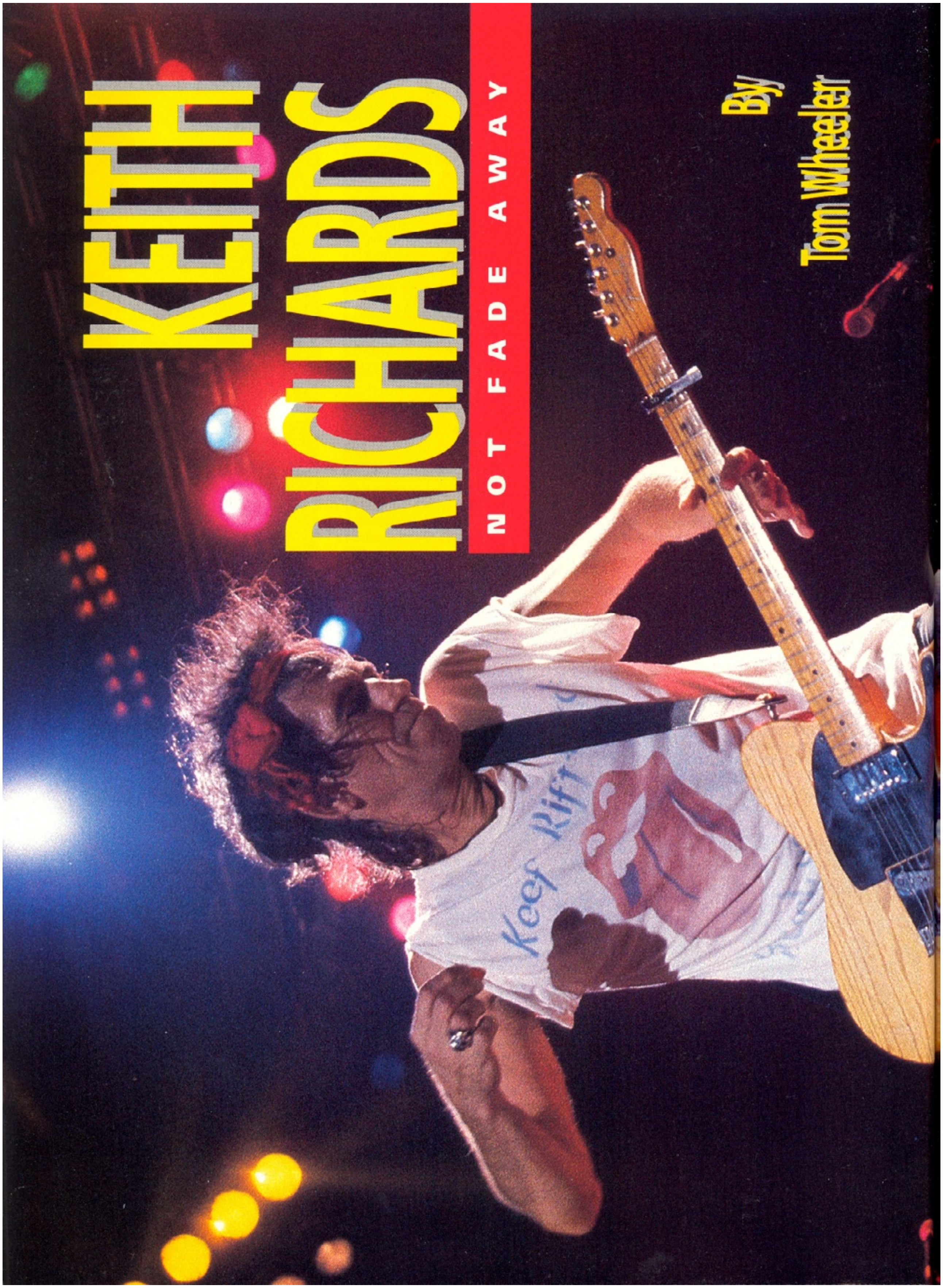
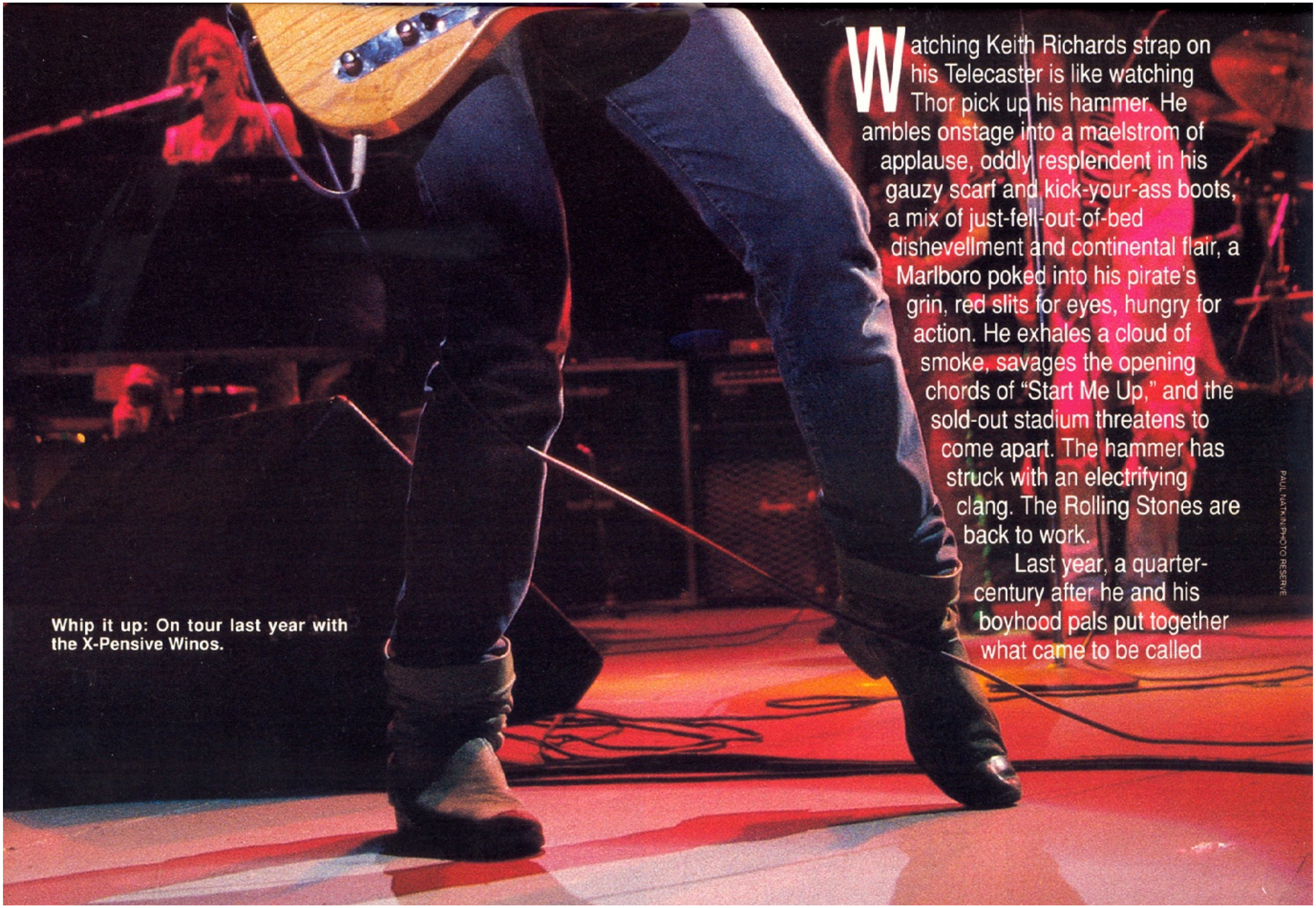


Watching Keith Richards strap on his Telecaster is like watching Thor pick up his hammer. He ambles onstage into a maelstrom of applause, oddly resplendent in his gauzy scarf and kick-your-ass boots, a mix of just-fell-out-of-bed dishevellment and continental flair, a Marlboro poked into his pirate's grin, red slits for eyes, hungry for action. He exhales a cloud of smoke, savages the opening chords of "Start Me Up," and the sold-out stadium threatens to come apart. The hammer has struck with an electrifying clang. The Rolling Stones are back to work.

Last year, a quarter-century after he and his boyhood pals put together what came to be called



Whip it up: On tour last year with the X-Pensive Winos.

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

KEITH RICHARDS

The World's Greatest Rock And Roll Band, and long after his own ascent to rhythm guitar's Mt. Olympus, Keith Richards found himself without a group. At the very least, his on-the-rocks relationship with Mick Jagger had rendered the Stones dysfunctional. With nothing to prove, and everything to prove, he decided to make a solo album, raising the inevitable question: On his own, could Keith Richards still cut it? Answering it took all of about four seconds into "Take It So Hard," the first single from *Talk Is Cheap*. Although no other Stones played on it, *Guitar Player* called it "the best Stones album in 17 years." Richards hit the road with his backup musicians, the X-Pensive Winos (featuring Waddy Wachtel on guitar, and Steve Jordan and Charley Drayton alternating on bass and drums), scoring another critical and popular success.

This year the Stones have reunited to face competition not only from a new generation of rockers, but also from fellow veterans of the rock and roll wars of decades gone by. Some of the latter have aged well, while others have been exhumed, resuscitated with electroshock and chest-thumping, and then wheeled out into the spotlight to give it yet another go. As "classic rock" formats crowd the airwaves, critics and fans alike assail this season of wheezing geezers, a celebration of glories past. How have the Stones, relics by pop music standards, avoided the dinosaur syndrome?

With two simple aspirations: record of the year, and tour of the year. *Steel Wheels* bolts out of the chute like a crazed bull with the opening riffs to "Sad Sad Sad," then ranges over exotic musical territories from the updated Delta hoodoo of "Break The Spell" to "Continental Drift," a loping camel-walk through a mystical Moorish desert. "Hold On To Your Hat" revives the rocket-sled tradition of "Rip This Joint," while "Terrifying" seems descended from the hypnotic modal jam that closes *Sticky Fingers*' "Can't You Hear Me Knocking." But while the new album surges with familiar currents—the lads croaking off the background vocals like boozy pub rowdies, the just-a-shot-away recklessness, the multi-guitar firestorms—it manages to recall classic Stones records without merely rehashing them. Plus, it holds a few surprises, such as Keith's achingly soulful nylon-string guitar solo on "Almost Hear You Sigh." On the first listen, *Steel Wheels* sounds like a very good album; as the spike of repetition grooves the brain, it begins to sound like a great one.

Some records are contrived through a laborious process in which instruments are isolated and recorded onto individual tracks, often at different times, then mixed and matched to create a facsimile of a real band playing in real time. Rough edges can be smoothed over, with each track hermetically sealed and the whole production embalmed in a high-tech gloss. No muss, no fuss.

The Rolling Stones don't do this. Their approach to recording? Plug in, let 'er rip, and see what happens. Instead of gleaming with high-definition parts, their records are blurred by ambiguity at every stage—overlapping vocals, indistinct divisions of labor among guitars, hybrid rhythms bumping and grinding up against each other, and various wisps of sonic debris swirling around in an echoey murk. These vast, impressionistic soundscapes are darkened with shadows and holes. And in those gaps between funky flat notes and "accurate" pitches, in the spaces between the beats, shrouded mysteries lurk and rumble, keeping the records ultimately impenetrable.

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

> "Making good records has very little to do with all the possibilities you've got. It's, can you make the *decision?*"

Steel Wheels is a prime example. Having jettisoned some of the overtly trendy trappings of their more recent albums, the band took a quick-and-dirty, back-to-basics approach to the project. Make no mistake, the record was meticulously crafted and employed state-of-the-art equipment, but the *process* by which it came to life sometimes seems threatened with extinction. Carrying the torch of a primal rock and roll attitude into the '90s, the Rolling Stones have once again managed to use high-tech equipment to produce an album that has all the high-tech gloss of a rusty switchblade.

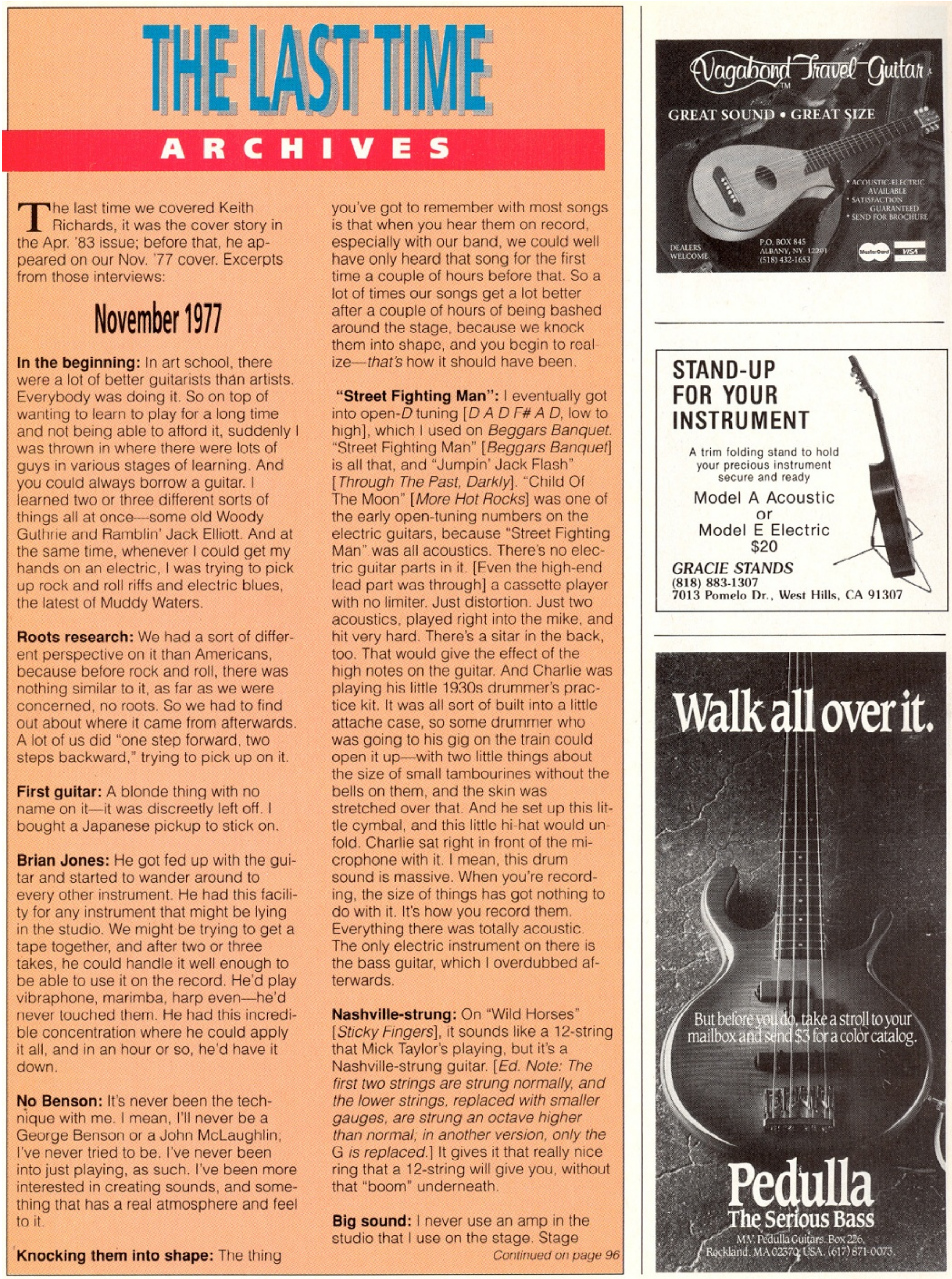
Of course, the magic of the Stones runs deeper than their patented apocalyptic garage production techniques. Although the music is in some ways complex and has been analyzed to smithereens, its vitality derives from raw elements: a rhythm section that pumps and pulses like the heart of a great beast, a millionaire jetsetter frontman who still sings like a street punk, the able musicianship of Ron Wood, and a guitar sound like nothing else on earth. To a significant degree, the art of Rolling Stones records is an extension of the guitar sensibility of Keith Richards, who sketches motifs with bold, blotchy guitar strokes, and then extends the boundaries with strategically placed guitar tracks from foreground to horizon.

In fact, if one were to diagram the blast pattern of the Rolling Stones sound, Ground Level Zero would be the precise point where Keith Richards' hands strike the strings. In his technique there is little conventional strumming. Instead, he gives every chorus, sometimes every bar, its own twist, its own snap. On a single guitar track he might play a couple of Chuck Berryish syncopated double-stops, a melodic lead line, and then a full-chord strum—all in consecutive phrases. As "Locked Away" fades out, for example, note how a sweet fill is followed by a pair of muted whiplash chordal chops.

He embraces both acoustic and electric, and in his own way he understands as well as any engineer the physics of compression inside the acoustic guitar sound chamber. Take "Satisfaction." Although the electric part is likely the most famous guitar riff in history, don't overlook the vicious acoustic strumming; felt more than heard, it operates on subliminal levels. Whether electric or acoustic, in the foreground or way back, a guitar in Keith Richards' hands is a lethal rhythm device that skewers the listener and has him wriggling like a speared fish.

His technique is perfectly complemented by his sound. You can play your guitar through a multi-component, high-tech rack system that simulates a particular tone by matching "sonic profiles" on a computer screen. Keith Richards couldn't care less. His dirt-simple, "right guitar through the right amp" sound is hardly the letter-perfect, "I've got a full-time Hollywood sound guy" kind of tone. Rather, it's an old-fashioned, tube-meltdown distortion that both rips and rings. Although this sound permeates Stones music in general, it is particularly crucial to their classic intros, where the air is electrostatically charged with anticipation: *It's all about to happen.* Using a tone that's equal parts bash and clang, a 5-string tuning in open *G*, and the world's simplest chord change, Keith Richards has fashioned the most immediately recognizable guitar signature since Chuck Berry's syncopated intros of the late '50s. On record, these storm-is-threatening moments identify a typical Stones song in three or four seconds; onstage they make "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Rolling Stones!" the most exciting six words in rock and roll.

Those six words are sending fans to their feet all across America. To support *Steel Wheels*, Richards and his confederates have amassed the only kind of tour they know how to present: titanic. The stage set, a jumble of chutes, pipes, catwalks, and grids, resembles a deserted steel mill, or perhaps a decaying rural rail-



THE LAST TIME
ARCHIVES

The last time we covered Keith Richards, it was the cover story in the Apr. '83 issue; before that, he appeared on our Nov. '77 cover. Excerpts from those interviews:

November 1977

In the beginning: In art school, there were a lot of better guitarists than artists. Everybody was doing it. So on top of wanting to learn to play for a long time and not being able to afford it, suddenly I was thrown in where there were lots of guys in various stages of learning. And you could always borrow a guitar. I learned two or three different sorts of things all at once—some old Woody Guthrie and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. And at the same time, whenever I could get my hands on an electric, I was trying to pick up rock and roll riffs and electric blues, the latest of Muddy Waters.

Roots research: We had a sort of different perspective on it than Americans, because before rock and roll, there was nothing similar to it, as far as we were concerned, no roots. So we had to find out about where it came from afterwards. A lot of us did "one step forward, two steps backward," trying to pick up on it.

First guitar: A blonde thing with no name on it—it was discreetly left off. I bought a Japanese pickup to stick on.

Brian Jones: He got fed up with the guitar and started to wander around to every other instrument. He had this facility for any instrument that might be lying in the studio. We might be trying to get a tape together, and after two or three takes, he could handle it well enough to be able to use it on the record. He'd play vibraphone, marimba, harp even—he'd never touched them. He had this incredible concentration where he could apply it all, and in an hour or so, he'd have it down.

No Benson: It's never been the technique with me. I mean, I'll never be a George Benson or a John McLaughlin; I've never tried to be. I've never been into just playing, as such. I've been more interested in creating sounds, and something that has a real atmosphere and feel to it.

Knocking them into shape: The thing you've got to remember with most songs is that when you hear them on record, especially with our band, we could well have only heard that song for the first time a couple of hours before that. So a lot of times our songs get a lot better after a couple of hours of being bashed around the stage, because we knock them into shape, and you begin to realize—*that's* how it should have been.

"Street Fighting Man": I eventually got into open-*D* tuning [*D A D F# A D*, low to high], which I used on *Beggars Banquet.* "Street Fighting Man" [*Beggars Banquet*] is all that, and "Jumpin' Jack Flash" [*Through The Past, Darkly*]. "Child Of The Moon" [*More Hot Rocks*] was one of the early open-tuning numbers on the electric guitars, because "Street Fighting Man" was all acoustics. There's no electric guitar parts in it. [Even the high-end lead part was through] a cassette player with no limiter. Just distortion. Just two acoustics, played right into the mike, and hit very hard. There's a sitar in the back, too. That would give the effect of the high notes on the guitar. And Charlie was playing his little 1930s drummer's practice kit. It was all sort of built into a little attache case, so some drummer who was going to his gig on the train could open it up—with two little things about the size of small tambourines without the bells on them, and the skin was stretched over that. And he set up this little cymbal, and this little hi-hat would unfold. Charlie sat right in front of the microphone with it. I mean, this drum sound is massive. When you're recording, the size of things has got nothing to do with it. It's how you record them. Everything there was totally acoustic. The only electric instrument on there is the bass guitar, which I overdubbed afterwards.

Nashville-strung: On "Wild Horses" [*Sticky Fingers*], it sounds like a 12-string that Mick Taylor's playing, but it's a Nashville-strung guitar. [*Ed. Note: The first two strings are strung normally, and the lower strings, replaced with smaller gauges, are strung an octave higher than normal; in another version, only the G is replaced.*] It gives it that really nice ring that a 12-string will give you, without that "boom" underneath.

Big sound: I never use an amp in the studio that I use on the stage. Stage

Continued on page 96

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amps are far too big. Probably the biggest mistake inexperienced players make is thinking that to have a lot of volume in a studio, you need a huge amp. It's probably the opposite. The smaller the amp, the bigger it's going to sound, because it's already going to sound like it's pushed to its limit.

The right stuff: If you find that you're forcing yourself to practice, then you're not being a musician for the right reasons. There are so many people today who want to be a rock and roll star without being a musician, and if you really want to do it, you'll do it anyway. I mean, you have no choice in the matter.

April 1983

Mick Taylor and Ron Wood: It was much harder to get a Rolling Stones sound with Mick. It was much more lead and rhythm, one way or the other. As fabulous as he is as a lead guitarist, he wasn't as great as a rhythm player, so we ended up taking roles. When Brian and I started, it was never like that. It's much easier than with Brian, personally. But also with Ron, the basic way we play is much more similar, and this isn't in any way to knock Mick. I mean, he's a fantastic player, but even if he couldn't play shit, I'd love the guy. But chemically we didn't have that flexibility in the band. It was, "You do this, and I'll do that, and never the twain shall meet." With Ron, if he drops his pick, then I can play his lick until he picks it up, and you can't even tell the difference.

Open tuning: You can get a drone going so you have the effect of two chords playing against each other. One hangs on because you've got to move just one finger—or two at the most—to change the chord, so you've still got the other strings ringing. It's a big sound.

Acoustic: There are times when an acoustic guitar will *make* a track. You'll be despairing, nothing working, hashing away. Take 43 on electric guitar, and somebody will say, "Why don't you try it on acoustic?" And you try it one time and you've got it. [Favorites]: Old Martins—several types of them—and certain Gibsons, particularly old Hummingbirds.

Mixing records: We tried it the usual way, but whenever we brought the vocals up we'd never like the mix as much. What always amazed me was that if the record was popular, most people would know the words—at least the key ones—within a few weeks, no matter how much the voice was buried. Years back, in the studio I always thought about those other records where the voice was too far forward, so you never really got a sound. You just got a vocalist with some accompaniment.

On singing more lead vocals: Well, if I sing the lead vocals, then what's *he* going to do [*laughs*]?

What young guitarists face today, compared to the '60s: 24-track machines. Otherwise, not that much has changed from what we faced. There's all this stuff about new equipment and changing styles and all that, but the point is, you still face a lot of rip-off artists, and you face a lot of work.

On Pete Townshend's comment that there comes a time to pass the torch to younger bands: I love Peter, but the time to stop is when you can't do it anymore, or when you're fed up. There's no passing on of the goddamn torches. Other people will pick them up anyway, and besides, that's not the point. I don't know if he was accurately quoted, but other people have said it anyway when they can't think of anything else to say. You see, if rock and roll is what you do, then that's what you do, and that's all. You don't sort of say, "Oh, now I give up and I'll hand it on to this band who I think is quite good." You don't hand it on in that way. Pete already handed it on, the same as we did, to some of the young guys that are playing now, the way we played Chuck Berry.

A jury of peers: When I am thrown in a court, or anybody like myself is thrown in a court, the jury has got absolutely no experience in the musician's way of life, so they're not your peers. I know justice is often rough and so on, but they don't know what it's like to be on the road for 20 years, and I can't explain it to them now. So give me a jury of my peers, with Chuck Berry, with Muddy Waters. And put Ron in there, too [*laughs*]—I mean, I can drop him a few bucks.

The drawback to being called the World's Greatest Rock And Roll Band: You've gotta keep *being* it [*laughs*]!

Being in a band: Most people don't know what a band is. The musicians are there to contribute to the band sound. The band isn't there for showing off solos or egos. A lick on a record—it doesn't matter who played it. All that matters is how it fits. The chemistry to work together like that has to be there. You have to work on it, figure out what to do with it. But basically it's not an intellectual thing you can think up and just put there. It has to be there. You have to find it. ■

stop. It's so big that even some pro football stadiums are too small to hold it and have to be fitted with a scaled-down version of merely huge proportions. How tall is it? Tall enough to require flashing red lights on top to keep airplanes away. The extravaganza entails state-of-the-art lighting, a pair of 55-foot inflatable gin-soaked bar-room queens, 12 miles of electrical cable carrying enough juice to power 40 city blocks, spotlights rated at a retina-scorching 50,000 watts each, a total crew of about 250, and set-up teams with multiple stages leapfrogging the continent, enabling the band to play several gigs a week.

Despite the spectacle, it's only rock and roll, wall-to-wall showstoppers performed with white-knuckle pacing. While most of the tunes are included for their firepower ("Midnight Rambler," "Sad Sad Sad," "Brown Sugar"), others seem selected for the sheer fun of it—"Little Red Rooster," "Paint It, Black," even "2000 Light Years From Home." The bandmates are clearly enjoying themselves. Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman still churn out the pumpin'est rhythms since Jerry Lee Lewis' left hand. Mick Jagger, The Hardest Working Man In Show Business While James Brown's In Jail, remains an aerobic phenomenon at 46. Keith Richards continues to squeeze more mileage out of a I-IV change than anything since Buddy Holly's solo in "Peggy Sue," and Ron Wood plays with a vigor reflective of his still youthful looks. If anything, the Stones are tougher and leaner than in 1981-'82, when they last ravaged American arenas.

Yes, the world is celebrating a long love affair with rock's most notorious band, but the Stones' current successes are so overwhelming that they keep the band from being swallowed whole by its past. Back in '64, Keith Richards speculated that the Stones might last six months, and surely no one could have conceived that 1989 might be the Year Of The Stones, but consider: *Steel Wheels* was awarded four-and-a-half stars in *Rolling Stone* and is ripping up the charts all over the world; as we go to press, *Billboard*'s Top Pop Albums chart lists the new record at #4 with a bullet, *Rolling Stones: The London Years*, described by *Time* magazine as simply "58 of the greatest rock and roll singles of all time," at #94, and *Hot Rocks 1964-1971* at #186, after four-and-a-half *years* on the chart; the band is on the cover of *Rolling Stone, Time*, and even *Forbes*; one block of 300,000 concert tickets sold out at the computer-melting rate of 50,000 per hour; and the tour, which is expected to rake in something like 18 million dollars *per band member* in gate receipts alone, was hailed in the *Cincinnati Post* as "the single best rock and roll show this reviewer has seen in more than 20 years." Satisfaction, indeed.

As for the rock guitar scene of the late 1980s, it's crowded with poseurs trying to look as menacing as possible; next to Keith Richards they seem as menacing as Richard Simmons. It's not so much a question of who's outposing whom, but of who's paid the dues, who's delivered the goods. As Chet Flippo writes in his new book, *It's Only Rock 'N' Roll* [St. Martin's Press], "There is no man on earth who knows more about or cares more about rock and roll." Keith Richards' face is the face of a rock guitar lifer, weathered and creased by a fabled, tease-the-Reaper lifestyle of scarcely imaginable excess. And yet, more than two decades after the Stones' first U.S. hit single, "Not Fade Away," his eyes still gleam with the spark of a teenage guitar wiseguy.

JAY BLAKESBERG/ARTIST PUBL.

"We went to the gig and then a riot started. The only big deal was how the hell are we getting out."

It's the sweetest of ironies: Elected by acclamation the band least likely to survive the '70s, the Rolling Stones enter the '90s in fighting trim, at the top of the heap, the competition nowhere in sight. Keith Richards gets the last cackle. Time is on his side, after all.

* * * *

Richards was extensively profiled in *Guitar Player*'s Nov. '77 and Apr. '83 issues [see The Last Time, page 95]; those cover stories would be a good preamble to the following interview.

Better yet, get your guitar and plug it in. Tune it *D G D G B D*, low to high. Barre it around the 5th fret and strum it, and try adding the notes one fret higher on the second string, or two frets higher on the fourth string, or both; also try the note two frets higher on the third string. Move the whole thing up three frets, or down two, or maybe down four, fooling around with the added notes in the same positions. Now sleaze up the tone, lock into a pile-driving 4/4 rhythm, crank up the volume loud enough to have your neighbors dialing 911, and start slammin'. Don't stop until the red lights are flashing in your driveway. Maybe that's all the introduction to Keith Richards a guitar player really needs.

* * * *

Let's talk about rhythm.

A hard subject to put into words.

In Chuck Berry songs such as "Sweet Little Rock And Roller," the hybrid rhythm mixes straight 4/4 and shuffle; you also explore that in-between-the-beats territory.

It's always fascinated me, man, yeah. Mainly because I realized after quite a few years that the thing that really intrigued me, that turned me on to playing, was precisely that—*suggested* rhythms going on, or a certain tension. Especially in early rock and roll, there's a tension between the 4/4 beat and the eighths going on with the guitars. That was probably because the rhythm section was still playing pretty much like a swing band. There was still a regular *jazz* beat, 4/4 to the bar, a swing/shuffle, which is a lovely light rhythm, very African, with a lovely bounce to it.

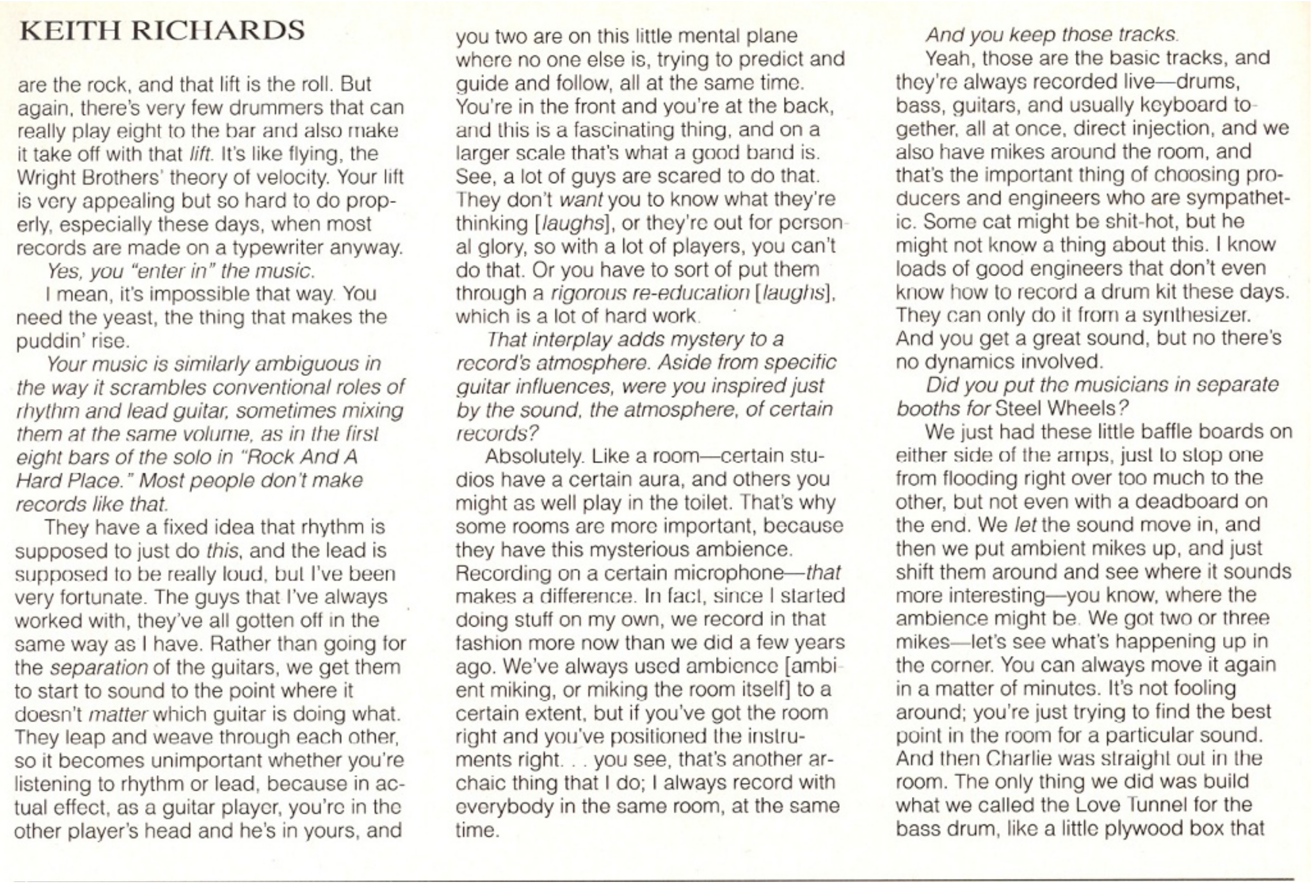
It suddenly changed in '58, '59, '60, until it was all over by the early '60s. The drummers were starting to play eight to the bar, and I thought at first maybe they were just going for more power. Then I realized that, no, it was because of the *bass*, the advent of reliable electric bass guitar. The traditional double bass went bye-bye, this thing that's taller than most guys that play the goddamn thing [*laughs*]. The guitar players were being relegated to bass. If you didn't even have a bass, you could tune down a guitar and play four strings; once you had an actual bass, it was much louder than an acoustic pumping eight to bar. And the natural inclination of the drummer is then to pick up on what the new bass is doing, because that's what you've got to follow.

Is that feel something that you had to teach people like Charley Drayton or Steve Jordan?

No, never. We talked about it, and for all I know, I may have pointed out some things, or talked about figuring out why rhythms change, historically. Listening to what it was that turned me on in the first place, I see this pattern evolve that you wouldn't see in the beginning when you're so close up. One minute you're listening to, as you say, "Sweet Little Rock And Roller," and in a year or two you're listening to "Something Else" by Eddie Cochran, which is all *eighths*, and [Little] Richard's piano playing eighths and *sixteenths* against the fours: da-da-da-da. So really, figuring it out was just me doing my bit of research.

Rock seems to have turned its back on that kind of rhythmic ambiguity.

Well, *most* music has, in actual fact, because there's not many people who can do it, so there's not that much of an opportunity to actually hear it these days. You don't get a lot of shuffles or swings, but I think it's something that's innate in me. I grew up on that beat, even before they added the eighths. That swing/shuffle gives it quite a little lift. To me, the eighths



are the rock, and that lift is the roll. But again, there's very few drummers that can really play eight to the bar and also make it take off with that *lift*. It's like flying, the Wright Brothers' theory of velocity. Your lift is very appealing but so hard to do properly, especially these days, when most records are made on a typewriter anyway.

Yes, you "enter in" the music.

I mean, it's impossible that way. You need the yeast, the thing that makes the puddin' rise.

Your music is similarly ambiguous in the way it scrambles conventional roles of rhythm and lead guitar, sometimes mixing them at the same volume, as in the first eight bars of the solo in "Rock And A Hard Place." Most people don't make records like that.

They have a fixed idea that rhythm is supposed to just do *this*, and the lead is supposed to be really loud, but I've been very fortunate. The guys that I've always worked with, they've all gotten off in the same way as I have. Rather than going for the *separation* of the guitars, we get them to start to sound to the point where it doesn't *matter* which guitar is doing what. They leap and weave through each other, so it becomes unimportant whether you're listening to rhythm or lead, because in actual effect, as a guitar player, you're in the other player's head and he's in yours, and you two are on this little mental plane where no one else is, trying to predict and guide and follow, all at the same time. You're in the front and you're at the back, and this is a fascinating thing, and on a larger scale that's what a good band is. See, a lot of guys are scared to do that. They don't *want* you to know what they're thinking [*laughs*], or they're out for personal glory, so with a lot of players, you can't do that. Or you have to sort of put them through a *rigorous re-education* [*laughs*], which is a lot of hard work.

That interplay adds mystery to a record's atmosphere. Aside from specific guitar influences, were you inspired just by the sound, the atmosphere, of certain records?

Absolutely. Like a room—certain studios have a certain aura, and others you might as well play in the toilet. That's why some rooms are more important, because they have this mysterious ambience. Recording on a certain microphone—*that* makes a difference. In fact, since I started doing stuff on my own, we record in that fashion more now than we did a few years ago. We've always used ambience [ambient miking, or miking the room itself] to a certain extent, but if you've got the room right and you've positioned the instruments right . . . you see, that's another archaic thing that I do; I always record with everybody in the same room, at the same time.

And you keep those tracks.

Yeah, those are the basic tracks, and they're always recorded live—drums, bass, guitars, and usually keyboard together, all at once, direct injection, and we also have mikes around the room, and that's the important thing of choosing producers and engineers who are sympathetic. Some cat might be shit-hot, but he might not know a thing about this. I know loads of good engineers that don't even know how to record a drum kit these days. They can only do it from a synthesizer. And you get a great sound, but no there's no dynamics involved.

Did you put the musicians in separate booths for Steel Wheels*?*

We just had these little baffle boards on either side of the amps, just to stop one from flooding right over too much to the other, but not even with a deadboard on the end. We *let* the sound move in, and then we put ambient mikes up, and just shift them around and see where it sounds more interesting—you know, where the ambience might be. We got two or three mikes—let's see what's happening up in the corner. You can always move it again in a matter of minutes. It's not fooling around; you're just trying to find the best point in the room for a particular sound. And then Charlie was straight out in the room. The only thing we did was build what we called the Love Tunnel for the bass drum, like a little plywood box that

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we knocked up on the spot, so instead of deadening the bass drum to stop it from ringing around the room, we used that.

It's like a tube?

A tube or a square, but it just covers the bass drum and then comes out.

How long is it?

About 12 feet.

You put a mike inside it?

Yeah, you can move it and get different sounds. It doesn't flood through the whole room, you see, but you still get the *air* pumped out of the bass drum, and that ambience and that atmosphere. These are the cheapest things to do. It's much easier to make records like that. You get the whole track in one go, if you got the right players, and you get this unique sound from the room that you'll never hear just plugging straight in.

How long did it take to record Steel Wheels*?*

From getting into the studio to cut the first track to having 25, maybe even 30 tracks—not all of them completed, but at least a good 20 that could be considered tracks—five weeks.

That seems very fast.

It is. We're all still in shock [*laughs*].

It's also the most acclaimed Rolling Stones record in years.

I think the two are possibly not unconnected. In a way, the most important thing maybe the Beatles and ourselves did was to treat every track we were cutting as if it was a potential single, and even if you knew it wasn't going to be, you still put that much work into it. Which inevitably after a few years is the reason that albums started to become important instead of just 45s. Before that, albums were two hit singles and a load of filler, even for the best acts—Smokey Robinson And The Miracles, every Motown act. It was what you did. You just sold the albums as extra gravy, and the 45 was the thing. In a way, without realizing it, the Beatles and the Stones probably did the most to actually hasten the demise of the 45. But that's in retrospect when you see that. By making every track as if it were a single, you are making the album far more important, and no one minded—the business was like a village industry when we started in it, compared to now.

This is a long, drawn-out answer, but by making a record like that, you kind of won the right to take as long as you like. That's very admirable, and the record company says, "Well, when is this record finished?" and you say, "When it's *finished!* [*Laughs.*] I *fought* for this right!" But just because you won the right to do something doesn't mean you should always exercise it. In the record industry, I know for a fact they were all like, ha, ha, ha, the Stones are going to make a record by June? It'll be like next *January*—this is the biggest disaster of the year about to take place. But in actual fact, working to the deadline added an incredible amount of zest and much more decisiveness in the playing and in the decision-making: Yeah, *that's* the take, that's it right there. Instead of 30 or 40 takes, if you didn't have it in five, screw it! We've got plenty more [*laughs*]! Try another one! In actual fact, nothing went much beyond that; some of them are two takes.

You had already had a highly acclaimed solo record and a successful tour, so apart from financial considerations, how important to you was it for the Stones to get back together?

It was very important to me, and even more since we've been doing it. I realized that this is the best time; this year was like the perfect moment, if it was going to happen at all. In another year or so, if we hadn't've hit it, it would have been more and more difficult to put it together. I guess with the Stones, you have to sort of accept this mysterious chemistry about 'em. I mean I look at them sometimes and think, that's all there is? Count them out—Mick, Charlie, Bill, Ron, me? That's really all there is, you know, and you have to take that into consideration with these boys, and you can never really put your finger on why it suddenly happens, but they just *stormed* in on this record. I think maybe [*long pause*]. . . I was saying this to Jordan last year when we were working on *Talk Is Cheap*, "Well, this should wake the motherfuckers up!" [*Laughs.*] And he

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says, "Oh, don't tell me you're doing this just to get your other band back together!" And I said, "*No,* man, it's *not* like that," but at the same time, I do have a feeling that it did act as a catalyst for the rest of them. They knew I was the last person interested in doing something like a solo album. I think it might have pricked them up the ass a little and may have crystallized the idea.

We'd had enough time for us all to get whatever it was out of our system, but that's one of those inevitable things. With Mick, I mean, I know I'm going to fight with my mate. You don't think of it in terms of being carried out via the international press, and when you actually get back together again and start working, and it's just the two of you in a room, you're lying on the floor laughing. "Remember when you said that I was a *this*, and I called you a *that?*" And then we start cracking up. A lot of the problems are in other people's perceptions of us. Where we get off on each other is when we're working together, and when you walk into a room and say, "Well, we've got to finish the record by June and it's already the middle of February and we don't have a song yet," and within two or three hours you've got two or three songs, you start to forget about all the other crap. You're on a roll, once things start going. I mean, nobody in their right mind breaks a roll. You follow it, and it's much more fun than recriminations.

So the deadline was really important, in that the band really tightened up. After two or three weeks Mick and I had enough songs to call in the guys. I heard Charlie in there as I was out in the parking lot, driving up to the rehearsal joint, and I just sat there for five minutes, and I was smiling like, *no problem.* He was so crisp, so tight. I thought, we've got the songs, and now we've got the drummer, and so the rest of it [*snaps fingers*], it's like that.

You typically orchestrate many guitar tracks on a record. When you go into the studio, do you have a conception of how they're going to fit together?

No. First I see what we've actually got on the band's track. There might be three guitars—Mick and Ronnie and myself on the basic track. Then I start to think what it needs. When we're cutting, actually playing the track, it's not really conscious, but I do sometimes detect stirrings at the back of my mind: "This'll need an acoustic, maybe a high-strung," but at the same time the other part, the front part, is saying, "No, shut up, you've got to think about doing *this* one right now." So certain triggers are going on while I'm cutting the track.

You might be leaving holes, knowing that later you're going to throw in, say, an acoustic rhythm part?

Yeah, plenty of times there'll be something fermenting; you've run it down a few times, and you start to pass it around a bit: "Oh, well, I won't play as much," or you say, "Don't fill in there, fill in on that instead, leave that alone there." Ronnie or Mick might say the same to me—it's not just coming from me. Or, "Bill, why don't you play an *F#* instead of the root note and see what happens?" Charlie will say, "This is too fast; why don't we take it down?" So there's an awful lot of tossing around. Each time you go in for a take, there's a little something else that will be different, and it's just which one captures the moment. There's always a point when you're listening to the playback and everybody looks at each other and goes [*rolls his eyes, nods, and smiles*]. It's hard when you've got two or three which are so close. You're bound to get divergence of opinion, and sometimes within yourself, as well, you're not quite sure, but usually it's pretty obvious.

Do you ever splice two tracks to make a composite?

Sure.

Any examples on the new record?

I think there is, but I can't remember which one, because we tried it on a couple others and then didn't actually splice it, so I'm not really sure. There's a couple or so on my own, too, on *Talk Is Cheap.* You try not to do that; you think, well, that never works, but a lot of times if one take

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comes right after another, it can work very well. Especially when you've got such great timekeepers as Charlie Watts and Steve Jordan, you don't have to worry. Jordan worked with Chuck Berry on the film [*Chuck Berry: Hail! Hail! Rock 'N' Roll*], and he didn't need a click track, and the tempo was right there. Same thing with Watts. They threw the click-track machine away and Charlie just says, "Look, if you want it on time, the click beat, then I'll give it to you, but it should really *raise* right along in here, and then come back down there." Because that's the art of it. You're not just keeping time, trying to be a metronome. You're *not*. As long as you know where that metronome beat is, you can go above it and below it; you can always come back to it, and that's the important thing.

Near the end of "One Hit To The Body" there's a multi-guitar interlude. Are you playing all the parts?

No, I was one acoustic, Ronnie was another, and then there's the two or three different electrics all coming in different places. I never, or I very rarely, use an overdub all the way through. I might do three different overdubs and two of them might be the same thing. Two different tracks might be licks and patterns, and two others might be different rhythm parts.

That's a lot of parts; how do you keep them separate?

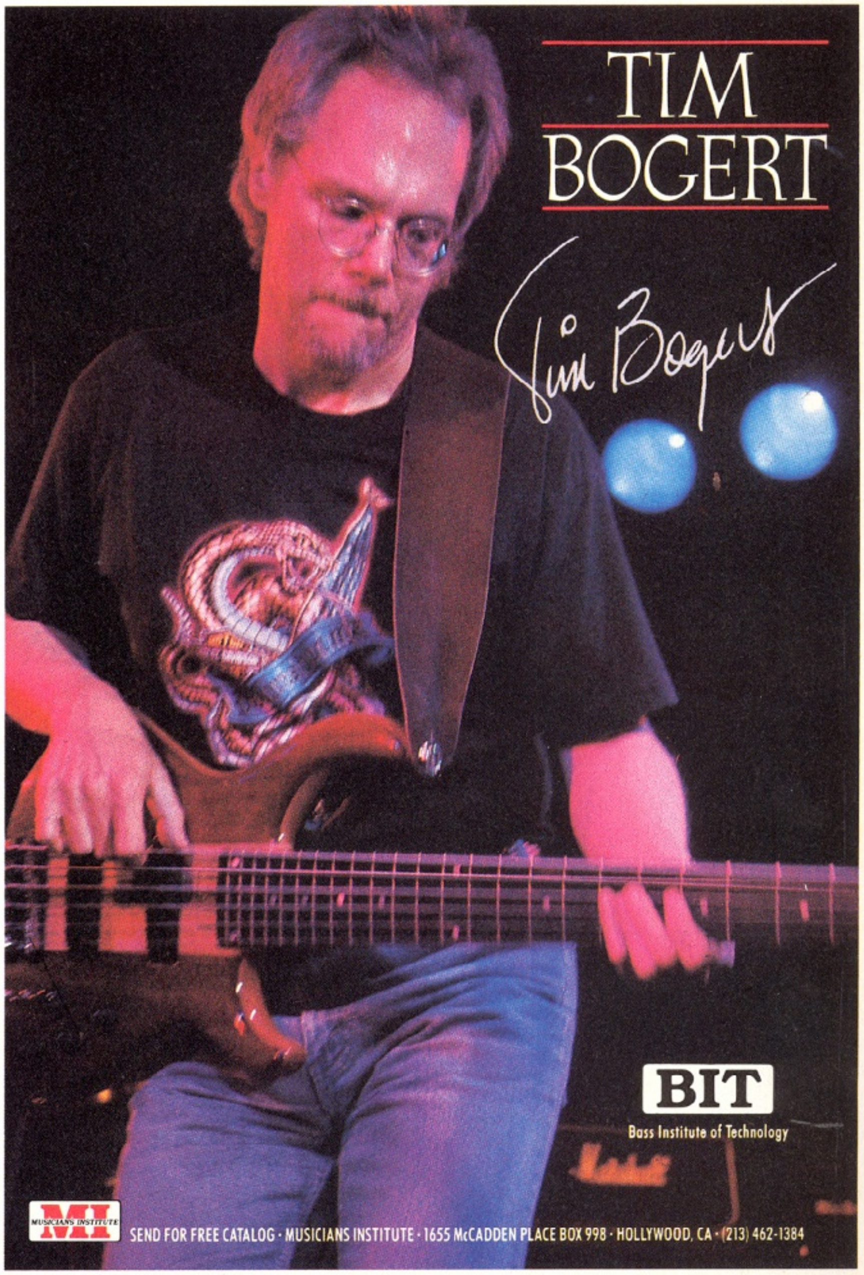
I just go out there and I play them. Sometimes I wing it—I know there's another something: Let me go out there for 10 or 15 minutes, playing along with the track over and over, and just see if I can find what I'm looking for. If I find it we'll take a few, and then I'll sort it out through the mix and listen to each one in relation to the other. One just hits in better, and that's the beauty of recording—you know you can do that kind of thing, but you've got to know what you're doing or you can get very confused; you can overdo it. Everybody has to have the same idea of what you're going for. Some guys are great engineers, but they have a different idea, and the difference between what you're after and what the engineer or the producer might be after can sometimes be an unbridgeable gap. But luckily I've only witnessed that in other people's sessions when I just happened to be there. It's been very rare that it's happened with the Stones. We've always worked with guys that are very sympathetic, who've *added* to the Stones. Everybody's in the band when you're making a record, and also when you're on the road—even the lighting guys are in the band.

Your music has a ragged edge. With high-tech studios, is it getting harder to make your kind of record?

Up until a year or so ago, yes, but maybe guys now are getting more familiar with the barrage of high-tech that's come along. There's always been evolution in recording. We started with 2-track and then went to 4—"Wow!"—and then you've got stereo—"Golly!" So we're used to this constant unrolling of technology, but it did come fast in the last 10 years, and a lot of the '80s has been that kind of toy-town music, and everybody is trying to figure out what to do with all these toys. They know what they can do, but how to actually integrate them together kind of reduced everybody to the toy department for a bit. But we're using the highest-tech equipment—you have to, if you want to use a good studio these days, because a studio has to have that stuff to have business, whether you like it or not. But it is possible to use it as a tool and an aid without losing sight of what you're doing. You can still record in a *room*, as well as do it digital, and still get what you're going for. It's been like a kid let loose in a candy factory, but making good records has very little to do with all the possibilities you've got. It's, can you make the *decision*? That's the focus of the energy.

You recorded "Street Fighting Man" on an acoustic through a little Philips tape recorder; any such unusual techniques on Steel Wheels?

Not as far as that goes, but there's plenty of using very small amps, little [Fender] Champs, and on the other way some very big ones, as well, really screaming out in the room without it appearing to do so. The other thing that I did this year, I decided I was ready to buy a good classical guitar, a gut-string. I got this Velasquez, a beautiful instrument made in 1956. It's just growing up; it's just 33 [*laughs*]. I started to use that on *Steel Wheels* [see Play With Fire, page112].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Do you play that classical for the solo on "Almost Hear You Sigh"?

Yeah, we called him Guts. I also have an electric one onstage. This guy, Roger Sadowsky, makes a gut-string electric, and it's the most beautiful sound, so we call him Electric Guts; it looks like a Telecaster, sounds like a classical. Beautiful wood, too.

You mentioned you used some small amps on Steel Wheels. *"Sad Sad Sad"?*

Possibly, yeah. It's hard to remember, because I will try one and then say, Ronnie, you try it. Also, one of the sound guys made us his own road amp, which he demonstrates how good it is by flinging it against walls and it still works [*laughs*]. I used that on a couple of tracks, exactly which ones I don't know. "Sad Sad Sad," I think you're probably right, it's one of those small amps. Mick's also playing rhythm guitar, so there's a lot of guitars on that—three guitars on the actual track before any overdubs.

You play the first thing you hear, though, right?

That's Mick.

No.

Yeah, well, he's been hanging around me a long time [*laughs*].

The first thing you hear in "Sad Sad Sad"?

It's Mick! Oh yeah, he can do a fairly good imitation of me [*laughs*]. Mind you, we spent a long time working on the sound. I join in at the very end of the riff there [bar 4].

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So he plays the open 5-string tuning, too?

Oh yeah, after a few years he realized I only had five strings [*laughs*]—no, he knows all my tricks. He's a good rhythm player now. He's the rhythm on "Hold On To Your Hat," with Ronnie Wood on bass. Also that guitar on the front of "Hearts For Sale" [the introductory low-register melodic line], that's Mick.

Ron Wood's solo in "Hearts For Sale" is so rhythmic that it almost feels like a drum solo. Did any drummers influence your own guitar playing?

Sure, I'm probably the most drummer-influenced guitar player around—Charlie Watts. There's no way that you can escape that, not that I'd want to. It's never intentional, but over the years we developed a style between us, a lot of it to do with the fact that for many, many years I couldn't hear us onstage at all, so I'd be forced right up against Charlie's drum kit in order to hear the beat. Through all of those years, we developed that way, and the only other thing *he* could hear was me with my amp right next to him. That's all he needed to hear in dire circumstances to keep it together. I mean, here you are, the chicks are screaming, and the band has no P.A. [*laughs*], you've very soon got to develop a way of playing where it didn't matter if we heard the voice or the bass, although of course it's preferable if you can. It was just Charlie and me. This is all hindsight, too—you don't realize it's happening. But yeah, my playing would have been totally different if I hadn't gone through that with Charlie. I developed more and more of the rhythm things and drum licks because that's really all I was playing to.

The intro to "Take It So Hard" on Talk Is Cheap *is an amazing sound; do you remember the guitar and amp?*

A Fender Twin, the amp. The guitar I can't remember, probably the one I call Micawber [like the Dickens character], which is my main Tele 5-string. It's a '57, with the humbucker in the front.

In the mix, it would have been easy enough to remove that snare rattle at the beginning.

No, we liked it [*laughs*]. Because it's the promise of things to come, the shivers as the guitar starts up. Sometimes it can be annoying, but it was just at the right volume and that was nearly all ambience-miked, so we took that intro off of the sound of the room and then fed in the other stuff as it got going. It's a quiver in the air.

The solo in that song . . .

It's Waddy.

Is the solo just a continuation of the playing on one of the rhythm tracks, or is it overdubbed?

Maybe it's overdubbed, but when I listen to it, it doesn't sound overdubbed. If it is, it's a damn good piece of overdubbing [*laughs*].

Do you ever take a rhythm track and

go right into the solo—same take, same track?

Yeah, if it's a good solo, and the sound is all right. There's times when after doing loads of overdubs, you just go back to the original. You realize after half an hour, hey, if I ain't got it by now, I ain't gonna get it. There's plenty that come back to the original, the one that's *in the room,* because it just melts into the track. You might get a better solo note-wise, but it just doesn't sit in the track the same as the others. Some things you gotta live with; some things you can't do.

The soloing at the end of "Locked Away"—you're playing standard tuning?

Standard tuning, the Music Man Silhouette.

When did you start using Music Mans?

When they sent me them [*laughs*]. Lots of people send me guitars, but it's not often, especially if it's a new guitar, that I'll do anything. They sent it to the *Talk Is Cheap* sessions, in Montreal. I picked it up and said, ah, this is special, this guitar is a unique guitar to me. They don't pay me, but all I can say is Ronnie is using one a fair amount of the time, and I'm using two or three. To me it's the most interesting all-around electric guitar that's possibly been produced since. . . I mean, it has the opportunity, if the production model is as good as the ones I got, to become like the Stratocaster or Telecaster or Les Paul, one of the classic electric guitars, and that's pretty amazing in this day and age.

It's a very simple job, beautifully made, and also you have the added high-tech thing—which is the only concession to that—of taking out the pickup. It's a modular thing. You can change the setup within about 10 or 15 minutes—just slot in, say, three humbuckers, or you can have them made up how you want, a different pickup sound in a few minutes. I'm still trying to figure out the exotic mixtures that I can get, which I'm working on in my spare time. "Maybe I can get this made up," or, "I wonder what that would sound like," so you can experiment. But as a guitar, it's quite small and it's got two octaves there, 24 frets. You've got a light guitar, 5-way switch, lots of different sounds. It's a solid little piece.

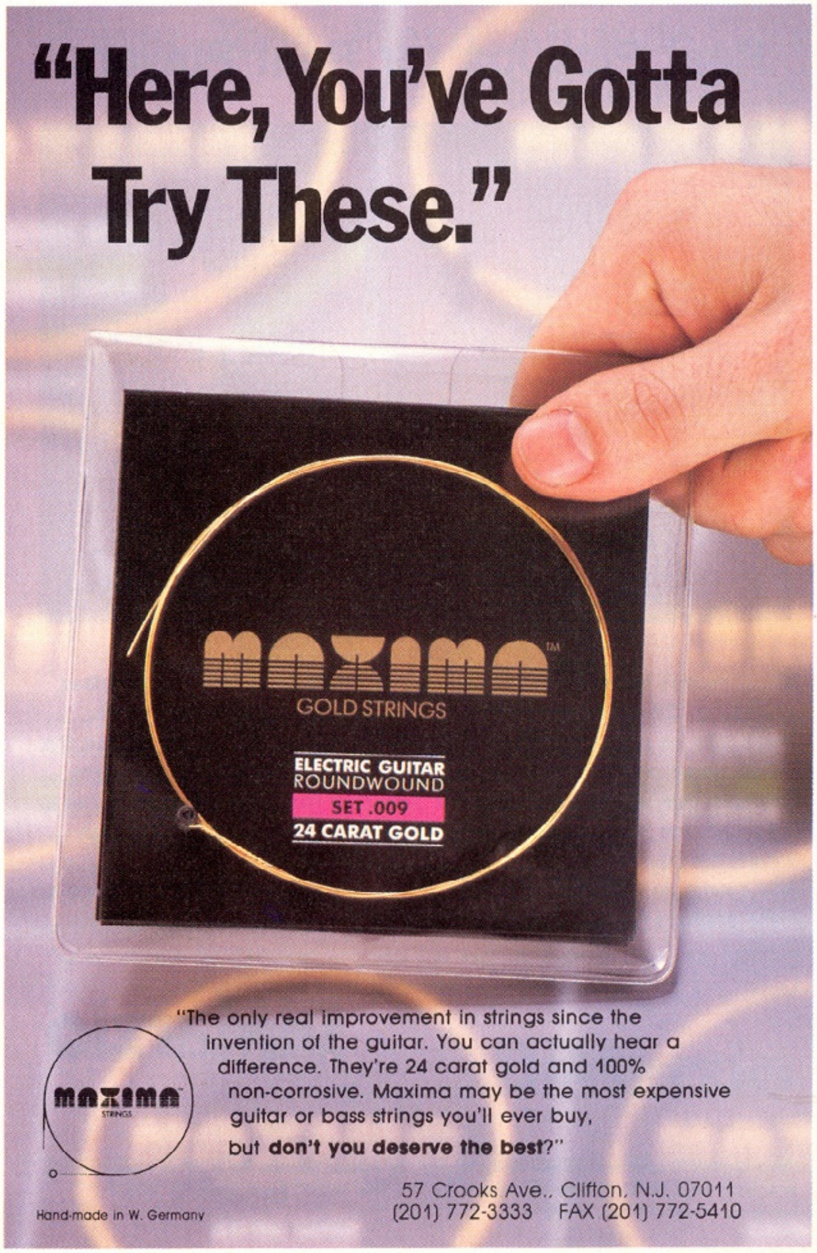
And you're using it for much of the standard-tuning work on tour?

A lot, yeah. It's very consistent. When you're doing a stage show, you can't keep changing your guitar every song, because you'd have to have like 20 guitars, with people tripping over them. But they're great workmen. You find a guitar you're comfortable with, and that's it. Usually if I get a new guitar that is even promising, I'll give it to a friend for a year and say, do something, work with this, and then I can see what it's like. But no, I took to them quick. I've got no axe to grind here, but I always acknowledge a good piece of work when i see one, and this is a very interesting guitar.

Was there a time when you thought you'd have to get away from the Chuck Berry style if you were ever going to have your own voice?

Oh, sure. Chuck's style is to me one of the loosest and most exciting to play. I was playing acoustic before, and Chuck and Scotty Moore were the ones that turned me on to saying, oh yeah, I've really got to get my hands on an electric. Of course, you can fall into a rut of getting someone's licks down so well that you are never gonna find yourself. After suddenly becoming a pop star, we worked three or four years and had maybe two weeks off in four years. Then a break came in, I think, '66. When we took time off, that's when I became aware that there was nowhere else for me to go like that. With all the years of not hearing myself onstage, I hadn't really progressed that much as a player. I'd learned how to make records and how to write songs, but there was no real opportunity to grow as a player. I mean, there's a period of 18 months where we never got past the third song in a set. We never actually *played.* We went to a gig and then a riot started and the kids hit the stage, and the only big deal was how the hell are we getting *out,* and if the get-out was set up, then we all felt happy. Around the third song it was just all over, just madness. It was living *A Hard Day's Night*—climbing over the rooftops with chief constables who don't know their way—"Oh, be careful, don't fall"—getaways down fire escapes, through laundry chutes, into bakery vans. It was all mad. We ended up being like the Monkees without even realizing it [*laughs*].

Continued



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Your adopting the open tuning seems to have been a watershed.

That's what I did. A year off's a long time. You start to get bored eventually. I mean first off you go 'round and visit all the fleshpots, and then when you get slightly debauched and jaded, you remember, ah yes, the *music!* So I went back to blues, back to the beginning. I started to research and found out a lot more about the stuff, which I hadn't had a chance to do since we started working like maniacs. I caught up on *listening* to music, which to me is maybe the greatest art. Playing is not—maybe sometimes it is—but listening to the music is an art; it can keep your sanity.

Open tuning was something that had intrigued me for a quite a while before I took it up, but I'd never had the opportunity or time to get to it, and it takes time—it's almost like picking up a brand new instrument. Brian Jones used to use certain forms of open tuning—tuning the third string down, or sometimes an open-*D*. I thought, I can't go any further in concert tuning, so I sat down with open tuning and it stretched out. Again, it wasn't really a conscious thing, but a necessary one, maybe. Sometimes the subconscious bits come up front and say, "In order to save you, we're taking over for a bit." [*Laughs.*] And so that sort of shoots the idea forward. I listened to some of the old-time blues, and read about it, especially on the back of album jackets. I got more and more intrigued about reading charts of different tunings—or *suspected* tunings, you know, the one that we *think* he's using. And then working with Ry Cooder, that was also a great spur to it.

That was around the time of Let It Bleed *[released in Jan. '70]?*

Right. Because I had already been working a lot with open-*E* and open-*D* tuning for *Beggars Banquet* [released Dec. '68; see The Last Time, page 95], working from what I'd learned during that year off the year before.

*But you weren't using the open-*G *at that time?*

No, not at that time, except I played around with it for slide, but I very rarely play slide on records. There's always a better slide player in the band than me. I did use slide on things, mostly on acoustic stuff like "You've Got To Move" and "Prodigal Son," stuff like that, open-*D* or open-*E*. I only found out recently that the open-*G* tuning is also known as Russian tuning, because the Russian 7-string guitar is tuned to *D, G, B, D, G, B, D*, same notes.

When did you eliminate the sixth string?

When I started to use the open tuning electrically. It's not the root note of the tuning; the fifth string is your root note, and the sixth would start to rumble, and also because you have to tune it down two notches it doesn't stay in tune very well, it's too slack, and it would just get in the way, kind of an unnecessary appendage. If a guy's only got one guitar and wants to use open-*G* tuning, then he's got to put up with that, but I've got two [*laughs*].

*Was "Honky Tonk Women" [July '69] your first hit record in open-*G*?*

Yeah.

That was another landmark just in terms of sound. The band really sounded different.

It was a great amp on that, for one thing. I really can't honestly say what it was, but the guitar was probably a Telecaster, maybe a Les Paul Jr.

Nowadays you use mainly Teles for the open-tuning parts?

Yeah, exclusively, maybe just because I'm used to them, used to the feel. If I try and use another guitar, it might be a great-sounding guitar, bit it *blooms* too much, or there's too much sustain. Because of the tuning, you get an extra ring out of the Telecaster that you wouldn't normally get, so the tuning kind of offsets that really nice dry bite that the Telecaster has, which is a great thing for hitting all of the strings at once.

On "How I Wish," when you repeat the intro later on in the song, it sounds like there's an added note on top—first string, 10th fret. Were you doubling open-tuned and standard-tuned guitars?

Yeah, it might even be an acoustic or a very dried-up electric, played way up high, turned way down so that it's almost acoustic-sounding.

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of "Beast Of Burden." It sounds as though Curtis Mayfield might have been an influence for those songs.

Yeah [*laughs*], that would be a very accurate pinpointing of influences there. When you're playing something like that, the obvious thing you start hitting is the soul licks [*hums a descending, major-scale hammer-on/pull-off line*]. When we first did "Almost Hear You Sigh," I played it very much like "Beast Of Burden." In fact, it was *too* much like it, so I called it "Cousin Of Beast Of Burden" [*laughs*]—I didn't know if it was going to get any further than a poor relative. But as we started to add the bridge part and it started to open up for me, then I thought to myself exactly what you said—Curtis Mayfield. It's that style. Curtis is the king of that.

Your open-string parts are always in tune, but in standard tuning the pitches are often kind of ragged—appealingly funky, out of tune a bit.

That's usually the way I finger, usually my thumb. I push the bass string just off of key a little. I don't know if it's because I'm sloppy or because I like the sound of it going slightly out of whack. Or maybe just because in a lot of the blues stuff, they would deliberately pull it off of key, especially on the bass notes. It's not so much on the top notes, usually, but when you hit the thing, you kind of compress the bass string. Sometimes I do it too much, though not as much as I used to. It depends on synthesizers and other instruments you're playing with. You can't go out of tune against any other instrument. But if it's just a guitar thing, I would do that. But I've often thought I do it just because to me it's natural now [*laughs*].

On the intro to "All Down The Line," for example, the guitar is out of tune, but it seems that if you tuned it up, you'd depersonalize the part. Does anyone ever try to tell you: Your guitar is out of tune, let me tune it for you?

Many times, but tell that to a Japanese, tell that to an Arab. I mean, there's plenty of times when maybe it's not "supposed" to have been out of tune when I cut it, but then when I hear it back I say it'd be *lost* without it. Just as we were talking about rhythm a bit earlier, with the eighths and sixteenths against the fours, here we're talking about a certain *tension* that's created by jarring the nerve just a little. If it's too obviously out of tune, then it's too much, but sometimes I'll say, "Yeah, I didn't mean to, I can easily go back and cut it again," and they'll say, "Nah, there's something about it." You realize that it's one of those psychological things that comes into the ear. As a professional musician, you cringe, and it's not perfect, and there is always that tendency to go for the perfect tuning, but that's kind of an illusion anyway. If you're a musician, it's very hard to stay a dispassionate listener, but try to preserve a bit of the *enjoyment* of listening without *dissecting*, without confusing it with work. I know drummers that don't actually hear anything on a track except the drums. It's a natural thing, but you're cutting yourself off from the reason that you're playing music. Once you are a musician it's easy to turn it into an exercise, and listen to it with a professional ear instead of what I call the real art of music: just listening to it and what it does. Otherwise we wouldn't be sitting here talking.

Your sound has a lot of distortion, and yet you can still pick out the individual notes of a chord. Any tips on how to do that?

I don't know. I always wish that somebody could've told me that years and years ago, and I'm actually still working on that. It's really finding the right guitar with the right amp.

More than the boxes?

More than the boxes, yeah. If you've got a good sound, you can always add a bit of this or that and fiddle around with it, but it's got to be *there*. The main ingredients are the right amp with the right guitar, and it could be the weirdest mixture—I've had some Australian guitar or a Japanese, you know, and it might be only right for one particular track, with absolutely no relevance to everyday playing. The guitar I used on "Gimme Shelter" on *Let It Bleed*—as if by design, it fell apart on the last take.

In the book Sweet Soul Music. . . .

A good book!

. . .there's a description of the evolution of James Brown's music: "The rhythmic elements became the song. There were few chord changes or none at all, but there were plenty of trick rhythmic interludes

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EQUIPMENT

Here's the lowdown on Keith's main equipment for the current tour and album:

Fender Telecaster #1, "Micawber": early-'50s, butterscotch color, black pickguard, stock 3-way switch. Sixth string removed, always in open-*G*, tuned *G, D, G, B, D*, low to high, no capo. Gauges: .011, .015, .018, .030, .042. It has replacement tuners and a brass replacement bridge with individual saddles, and the nut is cut to accommodate the five strings (they're not evenly spaced across the fingerboard, but the first string is moved a bit to keep it from going over the edge). Gibson PAF humbucker in neck position, original Tele pickup in bridge position. Warm and thick-sounding, Micawber is used on the tour for "Before They Make Me Run," "Brown Sugar," "Mixed Emotions," and "Honky Tonk Women."

Tele #2: also a '50s model with black pickguard, five strings. Finish is stripped down, natural, so the ash body's grain is especially apparent. Same mods and pickup configuration as Micawber, plus replacement frets. Stays capoed at 4th fret (Richards uses Shubb capoes), tuned in *B: B, F#, B, D#, F#*. A bit louder and brighter than Micawber, it's used onstage for "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Happy," and "Tumbling Dice."

Tele #3: also a 5-string, sunburst (not bound), maple neck, low frets; the PAF's cover has been removed, exposing the bobbins. While the other two Tele's have chrome- or nickel-plated replacement bridges with individual saddles, this one has a brass unit. Capoed at the 5th fret (so it's tuned in *C*); used on tour for "You Can't Always Get What You Want" and "Little Red Rooster."

Music Man Silhouette: Keith's main standard-tuning guitar, essentially stock, white-finished alder body, maple neck, three Schaller pickups (model 220B humbucker at the bridge, a 243 single-coil in the middle, a 220N humbucker at the neck; Music Man has since changed to DiMarzios), 24 frets, 4 + 2 tuning-key configuration, 5-way switch, non-tremolo tailpiece, volume and tone controls. Keith's guitar tech adds, "Although it looks small, it has the same scale length as a Strat, 25-1/2". It's light, the headstock is smaller, and access to the fingerboard is great." One mod: the knobs are push/pull, coil-tap switches. Used onstage for "Bitch," "Sad Sad Sad," "Undercover," "Harlem Shuffle," "Dead Flowers," "Rock And A Hard Place," "One Hit To The Body," "2000 Light Years From Home," "Sympathy For The Devil," "Gimme Shelter," "Satisfaction," and "It's Only Rock And Roll."

Music Man Silhouette, "Vintage Sunburst": alder body, DiMarzio pickups, otherwise generally like the white one; used for "Miss You."

"Dice": 1958 Gibson Les Paul TV. Nicknamed "Tumbling Dice," or just "Dice," the guitar is not in fact used for that song (it's named for a decal on the body). One P-90 single-coil pickup. Its six strings capoed at the 7th fret (*B E A D F# B*), Dice is used for "Midnight Rambler."

Micawber: "The open tuning offsets that dry bite that the Telecaster has."

"The Music Man has the opportunity to become one of the classics."

"Guts": A Velasquez classical, used for *Steel Wheels*, including the solo on "Almost Hear You Sigh." Purchased from The Guitar Salon in Greenwich Village (by appointment only; [212] 675-3236). The Guitar Salon's Beverly Maher reports: "Manuel Velasquez, now in his seventies, is a wonderful and humble man. A Puerto Rican who lived for years in New York, he now lives in Virginia. His guitars are exquisite, and the woods are *so* magnificent—they're just not available anymore. I've noticed that when people who are not classical guitarists decide to buy a classical, they seem to pick a Velasquez. The guitar Keith bought is *extremely* beautiful, a 1956. You can just pick it up and tell: Manuel built it with his soul."

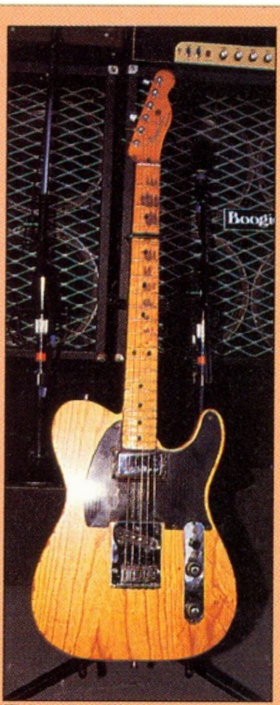
Benjamin Verdery, the distinguished classical guitarist and *Guitar Player* columnist, helped pick out the instrument for Richards. His report: "Keith—he's the *end*, man, such a cool cat. That solo on 'Almost Hear You Sigh'—isn't that great? Well, I got this mad call to help him pick out a guitar. I heard that he wanted a Ramirez, so I went to The Guitar Salon and played at least a dozen guitars. I picked two Ramirezes, but you know, I just had this feeling that he didn't want a Ramirez. There was this old Manuel Velasquez, and it was *such a sweetheart*, man. I figured that Keith didn't have big hands, and this guitar had sort of a rock player's neck, kind of Les Paulish, as opposed to this Ramirez, which is like a truck, a big old thing. Almost every Velasquez I've ever played has been

PHOTOS BY DIMO SAFARI

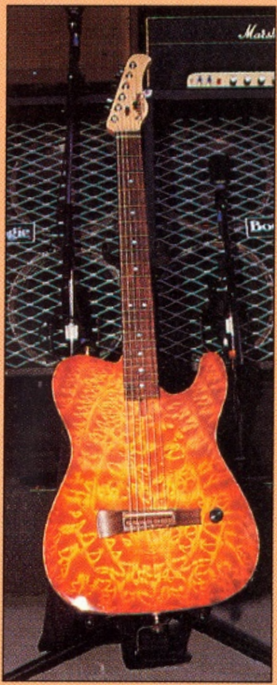
incredible, great for recording. It cost more, but I figured Keith's going to want a great axe, so what the hell. Bev was great; she let me take the guitars.

"I met Keith at a rehearsal in downtown New York. He was incredibly personable, no affectations. He was right up front: 'You know, I really don't know much about this stuff.' I showed him the two Ramirezes, and he said, 'Come on, come on—show me the one you *really* like.' He tried it and just said, 'Awww.' He fell in love with it, and the thing that was so clear, so refreshing: He just loves the guitar—that's the bottom line—like all of us. He was going on, 'Oh, I'm not really sensitive to it,' but he *was*—he was *very* sensitive to it. He was playing some fingerpicking blues, and he sounded *great*. I got such a kick; I couldn't help but think—Manuel Velasquez, if he only knew."

"Electric Guts": a sunburst Tele-style electric with nylon strings, built by New York repairman/*Guitar Player* columnist Roger Sadowsky, who details: "I built two for Keith. The only difference: One has a rosewood bridge, the other has padauk. The body is a quilted-maple laminate on mahogany, and there's a transducer by Larry Fishman built into the bridge, under the saddle. The custom preamp is made for me by Alex Aguilar. The guitar has regular nylon strings [D'Addario Pro-Arte J-45s, standard tension] and just a volume control." Used on the tour for "Ruby Tuesday," "Play With Fire," and "Paint It, Black."



Tele #2: "The sixth string would just get in the way, kind of an unnecessary appendage."



Electric Guts: "It's the most beautiful sound. Beautiful wood, too."

Onstage, anything can happen, and Keith may well decide to use a different instrument for a particular song, so the crew has to stay on its toes. All of the road guitars mentioned here have backups, just in case of a broken string (a rare occurrence), a capo knocked out of whack, or other problem. Richards has fewer than 30 guitars on tour, although he'll likely acquire more.

Amps: On *Steel Wheels* and also on the road, Keith is using a 1957 Fender Twin with four 6L6 tubes; originally tweed, recovered in early-'60s-style brown Tolex; serial #A00003. His guitar tech reports: "Keith hesitated to subject it to the rigors of the road, but we treat it gingerly, and it sounds great." Other road amps include a 50-watt Marshall head and a Fender 4x10 Bassman, circa 1956. The Fenders are used for clean and rhythm sounds, the Marshall for a dirty sound. Line outs from the amps are brought down to line level and run to power amps and three MESA/Boogie 4x12 bottoms. Richards almost always plays through two amps at once, and if he needs a dirty sound—for the solo in "Sad Sad Sad" or "Sympathy For The Devil," for example—he turns up the power amp connected to the Marshall.

Keith also uses a modified, impedance-adjusted Sony wireless unit originally designed for use with microphones, and it's provided very good results. ◼

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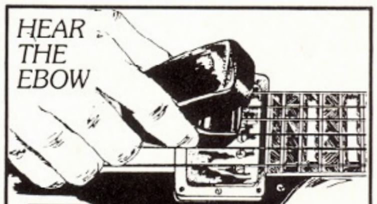

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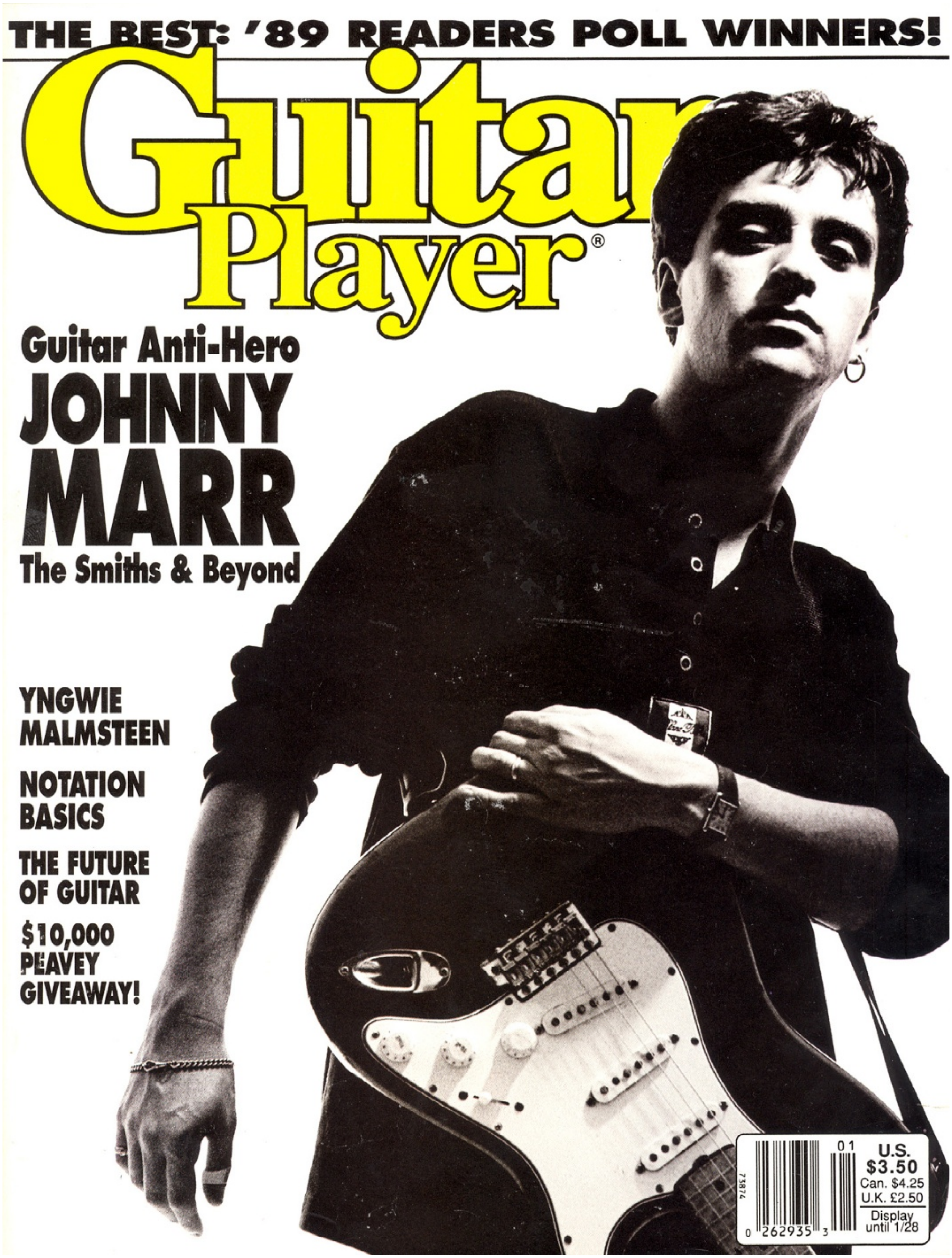

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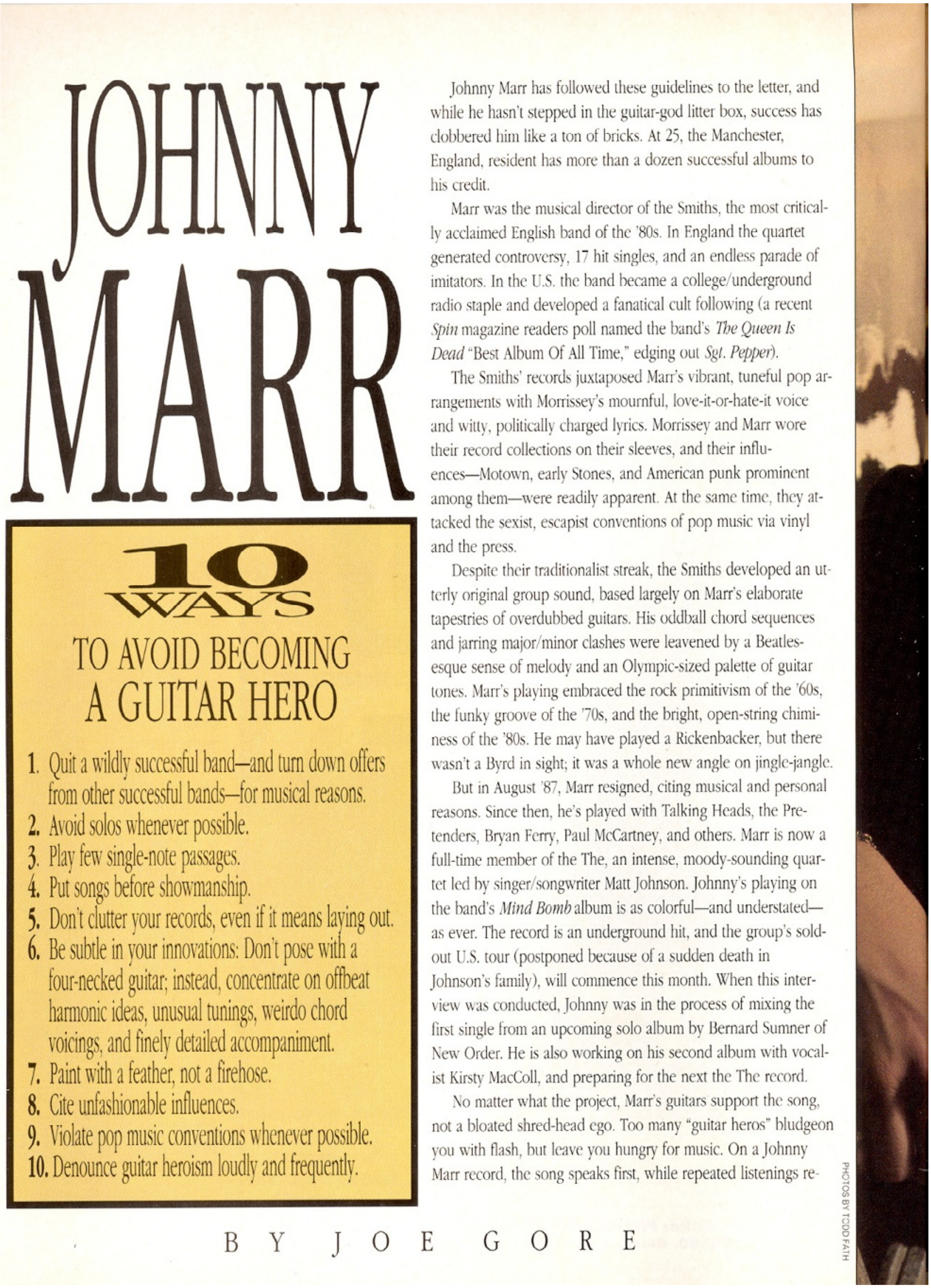


JOHNNY MARR

BY JOE GORE

10 WAYS TO AVOID BECOMING A GUITAR HERO

1. Quit a wildly successful band—and turn down offers from other successful bands—for musical reasons.
2. Avoid solos whenever possible.
3. Play few single-note passages.
4. Put songs before showmanship.
5. Don't clutter your records, even if it means laying out.
6. Be subtle in your innovations: Don't pose with a four-necked guitar; instead, concentrate on offbeat harmonic ideas, unusual tunings, weirdo chord voicings, and finely detailed accompaniment.
7. Paint with a feather, not a firehose.
8. Cite unfashionable influences.
9. Violate pop music conventions whenever possible.
10. Denounce guitar heroism loudly and frequently.

Johnny Marr has followed these guidelines to the letter, and while he hasn't stepped in the guitar-god litter box, success has clobbered him like a ton of bricks. At 25, the Manchester, England, resident has more than a dozen successful albums to his credit.

Marr was the musical director of the Smiths, the most critically acclaimed English band of the '80s. In England the quartet generated controversy, 17 hit singles, and an endless parade of imitators. In the U.S. the band became a college/underground radio staple and developed a fanatical cult following (a recent *Spin* magazine readers poll named the band's *The Queen Is Dead* "Best Album Of All Time," edging out *Sgt. Pepper*).

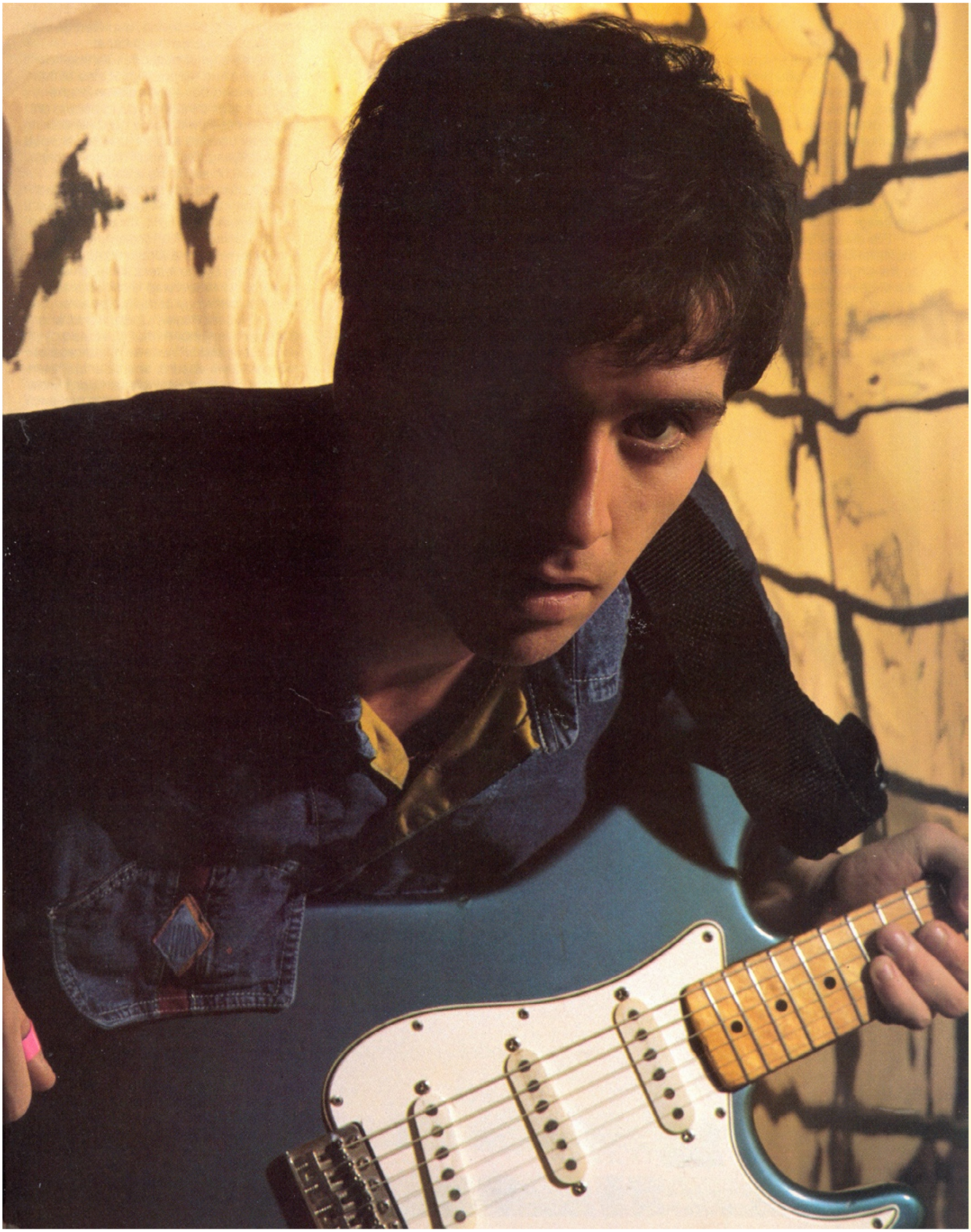
The Smiths' records juxtaposed Marr's vibrant, tuneful pop arrangements with Morrissey's mournful, love-it-or-hate-it voice and witty, politically charged lyrics. Morrissey and Marr wore their record collections on their sleeves, and their influences—Motown, early Stones, and American punk prominent among them—were readily apparent. At the same time, they attacked the sexist, escapist conventions of pop music via vinyl and the press.

Despite their traditionalist streak, the Smiths developed an utterly original group sound, based largely on Marr's elaborate tapestries of overdubbed guitars. His oddball chord sequences and jarring major/minor clashes were leavened by a Beatlesesque sense of melody and an Olympic-sized palette of guitar tones. Marr's playing embraced the rock primitivism of the '60s, the funky groove of the '70s, and the bright, open-string chiminess of the '80s. He may have played a Rickenbacker, but there wasn't a Byrd in sight; it was a whole new angle on jingle-jangle.

But in August '87, Marr resigned, citing musical and personal reasons. Since then, he's played with Talking Heads, the Pretenders, Bryan Ferry, Paul McCartney, and others. Marr is now a full-time member of the The, an intense, moody-sounding quartet led by singer/songwriter Matt Johnson. Johnny's playing on the band's *Mind Bomb* album is as colorful—and understated—as ever. The record is an underground hit, and the group's sold-out U.S. tour (postponed because of a sudden death in Johnson's family), will commence this month. When this interview was conducted, Johnny was in the process of mixing the first single from an upcoming solo album by Bernard Sumner of New Order. He is also working on his second album with vocalist Kirsty MacColl, and preparing for the next the The record.

No matter what the project, Marr's guitars support the song, not a bloated shred-head ego. Too many "guitar heros" bludgeon you with flash, but leave you hungry for music. On a Johnny Marr record, the song speaks first, while repeated listenings re-

PHOTOS BY TODD FAITH



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of gluing one part over another, new parts spring to life. So there is a fair amount of trial and error. I'm into experimentation, but that only feels good once you know you've got a really good song cooking. I don't believe in doodling around, waiting for inspiration to drop through the ceiling. If I'm not hearing anything, I'll go for a walk for 15 minutes. Actually, I come up with my best melodies away from the guitar, like when I'm in a taxi, or making tea in the studio, hearing the track from down the corridor. The ones I sing before I play them are always my favorites.

You're experimenting more with processed sounds.

The Smiths were quite a purist group, and I was a great believer in traditionalism. Just plugging a Gibson ES-335 into my trusty Fender Bassman or Twin Reverb was romantic. But now I understand that when technology is used by someone with taste, you can have tasteful results. Whatever makes for a more interesting end result, I'll use. For example, I've been using the Roland GR-50 guitar synth, and I'm really impressed with that. If technology allows you to come up with an absolute killer part, then it can only be a good thing.

Is there any guitar synth on Mind Bomb*?*

No, but I find it really inventive, especially if I'm just writing in a hotel on a four-track. I sometimes use the Casio MIDI guitar for that—the onboard sounds are cheesy, but they're good for demo purposes. It's corny to say, but if Hendrix had been around, he would have exploited today's technology for all it was worth, as he did when he was alive, as did the Beatles. Just because they used 8-track in their time doesn't mean that that's what you use nowadays if you want to be as good as the Beatles. But I've still got a healthy respect for traditional playing and a traditional guitar setup.

You're also incorporating more bizarre, unpitched ideas in your playing.

I'm trying to be open to any ideas, so long as they're fairly melodic and they relate to what the singer is singing. I'll try any trick. With the Smiths, I'd take this really loud Telecaster of mine, lay it on top of a Fender Twin Reverb with the vibrato on, and tune it to an open chord. Then I'd drop a knife with a metal handle on it, hitting random strings. I used that on "Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before" [from *Strangeways, Here We Come*] for the big "doings" at the start. And I used it on "This Charming Man" [from *The Smiths*], buried beneath about 15 tracks of guitar.

Those dense, overdubbed textures are one of your specialties.

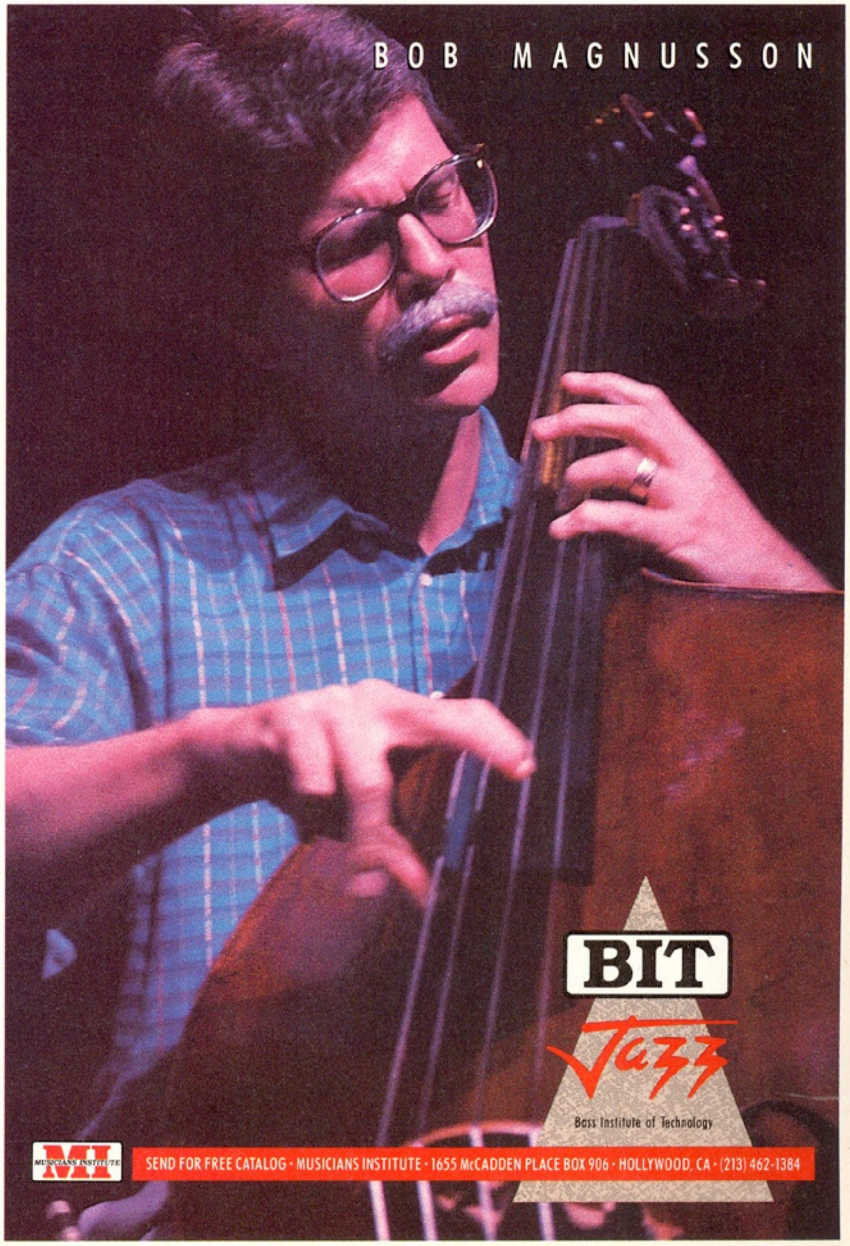
Once I've put a track down, I put on a pair of cans and listen to the track really, really loud. I listen for the things between chord changes, the things that you almost play accidentally moving from one chord to another, and I try to fill in those gaps. I try to glue together those harmonic and melodic overtones, and state the things that you imagine you're hearing. And if there's a sad melody there, I'll find it, even if it's in a major key. I really like melancholic melodies.

Yeah, even though most Smiths tunes are in major keys, the vocal and instrumental melodies often emphasize the interval between 3 and 5, the minor 3rd within the major chord. It's like a sigh.

That's right. And moving up in semitones is really good, too. I've never liked jolly music full-stop, unless it's someone like the Fatback Band.

Even when you were playing a lot of chimey, open-string chords on a Rickenbacker, your playing had a melancholy feel. You avoided all the jingle-jangle cliches.

Well, I've been open to tons and tons of influences. My parents are avid country music fans, and I got into music at an early age. My father played accordion, and he taught me harmonica. Because we were an Irish family, we had parties all the time. I had an uncle who played guitar and sang hits of the day, like "Walk Right Back," by the Everly Brothers, and I thought that was really cool. By the time I was 10 or 11, I started to buy T-Rex records—they were the first group I thought of as "mine." "Jeepster" was the first record I bought. The main riff, which was a complete steal from Howlin' Wolf, got me into playing guitar. At 13 or 14, I started playing more seriously, and I backtracked into Motown. I'd work out the chords, but I'd try to cover the strings,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piano, and everything with my right hand, trying to play the whole record on six strings. That's one reason why I'm so chordally oriented, and why key changes and the strategy of arrangement are really important to me. I was heavy into Smokey Robinson and [Motown songwriters] Holland/Dozier/Holland, because there was only Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple around.

Then I moved from the poor side of Manchester to the most notorious part of the Southside, Wythenshawe, which was full of musicians. It was normal for someone to have a guitar there—on the poor side, if you wanted one, you had to steal it. Billy Duffy, who now plays with the Cult, taught me a few chords, and someone else turned me on to Pentangle and Fairport Convention, with Richard Thompson. I started to get into guitar players as such, and when I got into Nils Lofgren, there was no turning back. He had a lot of cool and a lot of flash, but he had respect for the song and melody. Plus he's one of the best white singers I've heard—I could talk about him for years. It was because of him that I started playing with a thumbpick. And I got into the one-note solo from Neil Young's "Cinnamon Girl" [*Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*], which I thought was incredible.

Then when I was 13 or 14—hey, presto!—all the kids at school were getting into punk rock. I was starting to develop a healthy interest in songwriting and good melodies, and then this movement came along. I knew it was pretty cool, but I was too young to appreciate it, because I couldn't get into the clubs and spit on the groups. I was caught between two things.

So you were saddled with some unfashionable influences.

That's exactly what happened. But I had my own thing, and that held me in good stead in the future. It was not very cool to be into the Supremes when you're supposed to be into the Jam. But I did get into the American new wave scene, Patti Smith in particular. When I heard *Horses*, that changed me quite a lot. Then I got into Television's *Marquee Moon* and *Talking Heads '77*. After Patti Smith, I thought, "Great, I can play big, loud chords on a Les Paul through a Fender Twin Reverb, instead of sitting around with an acoustic guitar." I could pick like Bert Jansch, but I wanted to look like Ivan Kraal from the Patti Smith Group. From then on, I didn't look back.

Unlike some darker-sounding post-punk bands, the Smiths stuff had very pretty surfaces, with lots of major 7th and 6th chords.

"Reel Around The Fountain" [*The Smiths*] was my interpretation of James Taylor's version of "Handy Man." I was trying to do a classic melodic pop tune, and it had the worst kind of surface prettiness to it. But at the same time, Joy Division was influencing everybody in England. That dark element—it wasn't that I wanted to be like them, but they brought out something in the darkness of the overall track. In a sense, Bernard Sumner [of Joy Division, later to become New Order] was one the most influential guitarists and writers of the '80s. There would never have been a U2 or a Cure if it hadn't been for Joy Division.

So where does the jingle-jangle come from?

MEMORABLE MARRSCAPES

I wrote "The Headmaster Ritual" [*Meat Is Murder*] on acoustic. It's in an open-*D* tuning with a capo at the 2nd fret. I fancied the idea of a strange Joni Mitchell tuning, and the actual progression is like what she would have done had she been an MC5 fan or a punk rocker. I knew pretty much what every guitar track would be before we started. There are two tracks of Martin D-28, and the main riff is two tracks of Rickenbacker. I wasn't thinking specifically of the Beatles' "Day Tripper"—even though it sounds like it—but I did think of it as a George Harrison part. The Rickenbacker belonged to Phil Manzanera of Roxy Music; I'm told that it was originally owned by Roger McGuinn. All the guitars are in open tuning, except for one of the chorus guitars, which is done on an Epiphone in Nashville tuning [the four lower strings tuned an octave above standard pitch], capoed at the 2nd fret.

"(Nothing But) Flowers" [from Talking Heads' *Naked*] was the first track I heard when I went in to do the session. They played it while we were waiting for the rest of the band to show up to record "Ruby Dear." I was playing along over the intro, and [producer] Steve Lillywhite stopped the tape and said, "Great! That's it!" I said, "What did I do?" The highlife-sounding part on the intro is mine, and so is the Beverly Hillbillies 12-string part on the chorus. I'm not an avid follower of African music, but I've heard plenty of stuff that I really like. I'm interested in how highlife and I come together, because unintentionally, I'm a very highlify player. I guess I like really overstated melody.

"This Charming Man" [*The Smiths*] was the first record where I used those highlife-sounding runs in 3rds. I'm tuned up to *F#* and I finger it in *G*, so it comes out in *A*. There are about 15 tracks of guitar. People thought the main guitar part was a Rickenbacker, but it's really a '54 Tele. There are three tracks of acoustic, a backwards guitar with a really long reverb, and the effect of dropping knives on the guitar—that comes in at the end of the chorus.

"How Soon Is Now" [*Meat Is Murder*] was in *F#* tuning. I wanted a very swampy sound, a modern bayou song. It's a straight *E* riff, followed by open *G* and *F#m7*. The chorus uses open *B*, *A*, and *D* shapes with the top two strings ringing out. The vibrato sound is fucking incredible, and it took a long time. I put down the rhythm track on an Epiphone Casino through a Fender Twin Reverb *without* vibrato. Then we played the track back through four old Twins, two on each side. We had to keep all the amps vibratoing in time to the track and each other, so we had to keep stopping and starting the track, recording it in 10-second bursts. This sounds incredibly egotistical, but I wanted an intro that was almost as potent as "Layla"—when that song plays in a club or a pub, everyone knows what it is instantly. "How Soon Is Now" is certainly one of the most identifiable songs I've done, and it's the track most people talk to me about. I wish I could remember exactly how we did the slide part—not writing it down is one of the banes of my life! We did it in three passes through a harmonizer, set to some weird interval, like a sixth. There was a different harmonization for each pass. For the line in harmonics, I retuned the guitar so that I could play it all at the 12th fret with natural harmonics. It's doubled several times.

With "Bigmouth Strikes Again" [*The Queen Is Dead*], I was trying to write my "Jumping Jack Flash." I wanted something that was a rush all the way through, without a distinct middle eight as such. I thought the guitar breaks should be percussive, not too pretty or chordal—I wanted a cheap, Les Paul sort of sound. The main riff is based on an *Am* shape, with a capo at the 4th fret. I buried this one little guitar part in just the right place, so it

The Byrds is an obvious answer, and I did like them, but not as much as people make out.

I don't hear a lot of Roger McGuinn in your playing. You never use those open-position add9th-sus4 voicings.

That's good, for a change. Actually, a lot of it comes from Neil Young and Danny Whitten of Crazy Horse, but as if they were in a pop group. And it was George Harrison who influenced me to get a Rickenbacker. "Ticket To Ride" [*Help!*]—what a brilliant song! But most of all, the jingle-jangle came from James Honeyman-Scott of the Pretenders. He was the last important influence on my playing before I went out on my own. The first time I played "Kid" [*Pretenders*] with the Pretenders, I couldn't believe it. I've used that solo to warm up with every day for years.

Unlike a lot of other jingle-janglers, you didn't rub the listener's nose in your guitars. There's was a lot of depth and mystery to your textures.

Again, that comes from being influenced by groups and records, and not guitar players. For example, [producer] Phil Spector was really important to me, and I like the idea of records, even those with plenty of space, that sound "symphonic." I like the idea of all the players merging into one atmosphere. I tend to hear the record as it will be produced as I'm writing the song, and I hear how the guitars will link together. The Rolling Stones were a big influence in the way the two guitars played off each other. And Roxy Music was very important to the Smiths. They always had fantastic intros and outros, and on the eleventh hearing you'd pick out something you'd never heard before. But I must give credit to John Porter, who produced a lot of the Smiths' records. He worked with Roxy Music in the '70s, and he taught me a hell of a lot about guitars. He figured that if everyone spends two days getting drum sounds, why not spend the time on the guitar sounds if you're a guitar group? We spent a lot of time on our sounds, and I still do.

> "I like the idea of all the players merging into one atmosphere."

You often tune your entire guitar up a whole step, to F#. Why did you start doing that?

When Morrissey and I started writing, my ideas just sounded too low when we started working on them with the voice. But [Smiths bassist] Andy Rourke didn't play in *F#*, so all the guitar parts sounded really toppy on the first album, while the vocals were in a low register. It made for an odd sound that really worked. I also use a lot of regular boring open tunings like *G*, *D*, and *A*, and I use Nashville tuning all the time. I've got an Epiphone Coronet with one pickup, and I string it with the high strings from a 12-string set. It's a really zingy, trebly guitar. I used that on a lot of things that people think are 12-string, like the end of "The Headmaster Ritual" [*Meat Is Murder*]. I also used it on the studio version of "The Draize Train" [the B-side of the "Panic" single], along

sounds like overtones of the main part, but it's really there. On the first of the two breaks, I'm playing slide through an AMS harmonizer, really high. For the second one, I used a Gibson Les Paul Black Beauty and a Rickenbacker together, playing a regular ***Em*** shape, but it's sampled and triggered off the snare drum roll. We credited the background vocal to "Ann Coates," but that's a joke—it's the name of a place in Manchester. It's really Morrissey's voice, speeded up.

"The Right Stuff" [From Bryan Ferry's *Bete Noire*] was born accidentally out of a backwards riff at the end of a piece of tape on my 4-track. I learned the part, then recorded it forwards. That's one of the great things about being in the studio, those "tricks," for want of a better term. Maybe I'll have a part that's *almost* fantastic, and then I'll flip the tape over, learn it backwards, and then play it backwards. Originally, the song was called "Money Changes Everything," and it was the B-side of a Smiths single, an instrumental. Bryan heard it, and he wanted to put some words to it. All the volume swells were done on the volume pot of an American Standard Strat. The bass track and the Roland drum machine pattern had already been put down, so it was the first session where I did purely overdubs. It was a novelty, but when it comes to my songs, I like to put things down as a group, especially drums and rhythm guitar. Neil Hubbard also plays on Bryan's version.

We were working on "Good Morning Beautiful" [*Mind Bomb*] at 3 A.M. I was trying to come up with a part for the big *A-B-F#m* change. We got a really good sound with the '59 Les Paul through a Cry Baby and two brand-new Twin Reverbs. Matt Johnson said, "Johnny, I want Jesus Christ meets the Devil." I said, "You know, Matt, this is a piece of wood with six strings on it, and I'm just some scruff from Manchester!" So I played a really simple part, but the sound was enormous, and it sat just right with the track. That's the only the The song where the lead parts were done with a Les Paul. Usually, I find that the false harmonics I use just ring truer on a Strat. And there's a track of me making wailing noises in the background. That was just echoes, atmosphere, and lots of wine. That track was just given an award by George Martin for some engineering magazine as the best-sounding track of '89.

On "Ask" [*Louder Than Bombs*], Craig Gannon [second guitarist for the Smiths during their latter days] and I are playing Martin acoustics. I play the *G-Am-C-D* progression on a Rickenbacker 330. The high-lify part is played on a '63 Strat. I'm also vamping on a *G* harmonica through a Urei Boom Box, an early-'70s piece of outboard gear that we also used a lot on guitars, as well. It's like one of those vulgar "loudness" buttons on a hi-fi. It pushes things slightly out of phase, but gives them a bottomy, dense sound. It's a big chrome box with one knob: "intensity." Hey, maybe one of the readers can write in and tell us about it.

Matt Johnson's lyrical images are so strong, spiritually and politically. "Beyond Love" [*Mind Bomb*] has a passionate, intense erotic feel, and there was plenty of room for some really nice noises, wails, and atmospheres. It's my favorite bit of volume-knob work—I think I got it right that time. I played a harmonic *D* at the 7th fret of the *G* string on a new stock Strat, then, without a whammy bar attached, I pressed down on the bridge, raising it. The delay effect was on a T.C. Electronic 2290. The sounds at the end are harmonics, swelled up with the volume knob, and with the echo kicked in.

The "Super Bad" riff on "The Violence Of Truth" [*Mind Bomb*] is played on a Les Paul plugged straight into the desk, with the line inputs really hot. It was the only way I could get that tight, almost hi-fi distortion, as opposed to designer distortion, which a lot of these little floor pedals give you. I don't like those things at all—they sound like a bee in a bottle. And one of my favorite riffs I ever played—and one of the simplest—is the one based on low ***F#***. I tuned the low ***E*** up to ***F#*** for a drone, and then I played the octave ***F#*** on the ***A*** string, sliding up from ***C#***. I put tape over all the other strings to keep them from ringing out. *—Johnny Marr*

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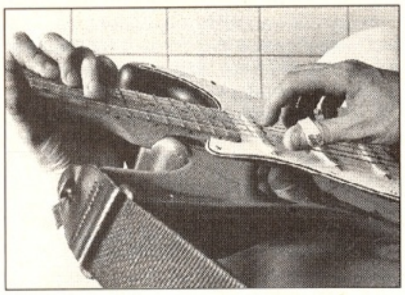
with two Rickenbackers. I was working with Alan Rogan, the famed English guitar technician. He said, "Well, if you want a Pete Townshend sound, I'll bring down two of Pete's guitars." I don't know whether Pete knows about that!

Did you use thumbpicks with the Smiths?

I played with a flatpick because I thought we needed a Ramones element. But since then, I've gone back to the thumbpick. I wanted something more fluid, and when you have all five right-hand fingers going, your fingers go to progressions you don't even know you're doing. I don't use right-hand nails—I'm a horrible nail-biter. But my fingertips are really hard.



Do you have trouble getting a light strum feel with the heavy plastic of the thumbpick?

I find that's one of the most difficult things. But I try to zing it with my fingers, like an upward flamenco-style stroke [see photo]. I often hold the thumbpick just like a regular pick, just to get that bright attack. My thumb's quite fast. I use fingers and thumbs for soloing, coming up with parts, or for funky things where I'm sort of slapping. That's what I do on the funky line in "Violence Of Truth" [*Mind Bomb*].

Which records captured the Smiths at their peak?

The Queen Is Dead is certainly the best LP we made, the most focused from start to finish. It was a dark point in my life, but creatively, it made for something really brilliant. I try to take care of myself and live in the real world, but some of my best work has been produced when I wasn't in the real world. Pop music isn't worth killing yourself for, but when you do something extra-special, it's *almost* worth it. Singles-wise, my favorite is "How Soon Is Now" [on *Meat Is Murder* in the U.S.].

Were you behind the Smiths' eventual move towards more orchestrated, "produced" sounds? Your approach was quite like the Beatles at times.

Musically, the production was my responsibility. But to be fair, it was a 50/50 thing between Morrissey and me. We were completely in sync about which way we should go for each record. But we started to lose that near the end of the last LP, which was another signal to me that we should stop. The "White Album" [*The Beatles*] was the strongest influence on us towards the end, things like "Cry Baby Cry" and "I'm So Tired."

Were the Smiths misrepresented to American listeners, who knew the band through their albums rather than their singles?

I'd say so, because singles were one of the most important things that brought us together, a love of the classic 7" pop format. Those were the records I grew up with. A huge facet of what we were about was missed out on, because singles culture is so ineffectual in America. But I thought *Louder Than Bombs*, the singles compilation, was great.

What did you think of the live album?

Guitar-wise, I'm not particularly proud of it, partly because I used to be in such panic before I played onstage that I either froze up, or I got so drunk that I was sloppy. That was a combination of natural stage fright and being in the ridiculous position in England of being so scrutinized. I never played as well on tour.

Did you see budding alcoholism as a warning sign about your career with the band?

Yeah, I did, and to be honest, it was more than "budding." I find the "guitar player does tour, is driven to drink" idea very corny, but it could have been a lot worse. It sounds incredibly Guns N' Roses, but the Smiths went through every conceivable rock and roll tragedy: drug busts, police harassment, controversy. We had everything but a death, thank God. That was avoided by us splitting up.

You were luckier than some.

We were *smarter* than some. Some

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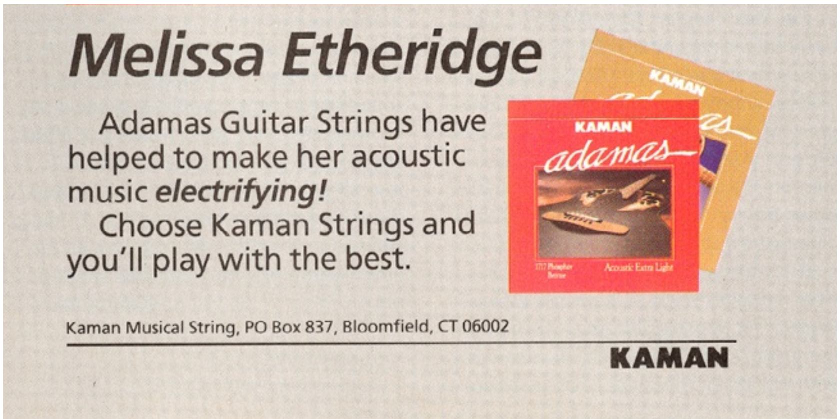
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groups actually start believing they're the Rolling Stones, and that's how they do themselves in.

What prompted the final split?

It was mostly a personal thing. We were working at such a breakneck pace—50-odd tracks in four years—that I thought I was going to end up repeating myself. Also, I was frustrated with what people expected me to come up with. By creating your own rules—the influences, methods of songwriting, and so on that you allow yourself to use—you end up boxing yourself into a corner of musical politics. And if you step out of that corner, it's immediately called "sell-out." Some "fans"—for want of a better word—just wanted me to jingle-jangle on my Rickenbacker till I died. But if I have to forsake fame, fortune, and popularity for the experience of being able to play exactly what I want when I want, I'd do it again.

> "Some 'fans'—for want of a better word–just wanted me to jingle-jangle on my Rickenbacker till I died."

But in the beginning, it was good to be in a group that stood for and against certain things. We were against synthesizers, the Conservative government, groups with names like "Orchestral Manoeuvers In The Dark," the English monarchy, cock-rock guitar solos, and the American music scene at the time. We stood for the Englishness of the Kinks, T-Rex, and Roxy Music, the arty quirks that kept those groups from being huge in the U.S. We were into the Rolling Stones, the MC5, the Patti Smith Group, Oscar Wilde, [playwright] Shelagh Delaney, and certain actors. Some things were really important to us, and we made no secret of our obsessions. Morrissey and I wanted to be a modern-day Leiber and Stoller, writing bubblegum backing tracks with intense lyrics. We weren't minimalistic, but we wanted to sound very home-grown, not like a polished major-label group. I'm very proud of everything we did, musically, lyrically, and politically. It was a really great time, but only a fool doesn't know when it's time to stop.

Were you widely scouted when the news of the breakup hit the street?

Lots, and I was quite flattered. But I was so lacking in confidence when I left the Smiths that I was afraid. To be honest, I thought I'd flushed my career down the toilet, but I was gonna have a good time, anyway. But it worked out well. I'm quite happy to keep on turning things down, because the people I'm involved with—the The, Kirsty, and Bernard—are my favorites. I'm very proud of the Kirsty MacColl record. I wrote two of the songs and played on nine tracks. I got a chance to play opposite Robbie McIntosh and Dave Gilmour.

Why did you feel you weren't the right guitarist for the Pretenders?

It was mainly a question of timing. Chrissie wanted to take a break to write the LP she's working on now, and I was fired up to tour or make a record. The tracks I cut with the Pretenders I regard as a complete success. They were the first take, with live vocals and no punch-ins or re-recording. Chrissie is so good that she can inspire a group with her personality and her voice to play the best they've ever played—she's that good as a front person. I feel very good to have played with Chrissie, but the most important thing was

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our personal relationship. She helped me through a lot of crap with the Smiths' split, and I'm forever indebted to her.

Did you consciously put aside the Rickenbacker after the Smiths era?

Yeah, I was getting a little tired of the things I was coming up with on it. About '86, I got really into the Les Paul and rediscovered Peter Green. I tried to play less chordally, a little more solo-notey. But the solo on "Paint A Vulgar Picture" [*Strangeways*] was done on a Strat.

How did it feel to play a regular single-note solo like that after becoming known as the man who never soloed?

I was really pleased that the first solo as such on a Smiths record was one you could sing. Since then, I've done more wild, wacky fast things; that's going to be more of a feature of my new stuff. I like improvisation in the right place, but I find most solos corny. That "now I'm gonna solo my ass off" attitude is the equivalent of someone just being a loudmouth and talking rubbish. I prefer the idea of a relentless riff that goes around and around, like the line on "The Violence Of Truth" [*Mind Bomb*].

So what would you call the non-solo guitar passages on tunes like "The Queen Is Dead" or "Shoplifters Of The World Unite" [Louder Than Bombs]*? They deliver the charge you'd expect from a solo, but you don't actually solo.*

I think of them as guitar breaks. I like the one in "Shoplifters"—that was the first time I used harmonized layering. People have said it sounds like Brian May, but I was thinking of stacked Roy Buchanans. For the frenzied wah-wah section on "The Queen Is Dead," I was thinking '60s Detroit, like the MC5 and the Stooges.

Nowadays, you seem to be using more dry, un-jangly, funk-type riffs than you did with the Smiths.

I like those overstated guitar parts, like the one on the Fatback Band's "Yum, Yum, Gimme Some" [*Yum Yum*], which gives you all the rhythmic bits that your body wants to feel. A classic for me is Nile Rodgers' guitar part on Chic's "I Want Your Love" [*Les Plus Grands Succes De Chic*]. All that is born out of an early love for Bo Diddley. That beat is the root of all dance music. When I do sessions and I can't find a way into the track, I look for the Bo Diddley, whether it's half-time or double-time.

That figure runs through all African-derived music.

That's right, and if it doesn't run through it specifically, it does subliminally. Bo Diddley took the bits that you wanted, and hooked them all together in an overstated way. One of the things that attracted me to Bo Diddley early on was my parents' copy of Elvis Presley's "Marie's The Name," which has that beat. The Talking Heads called me in specifically because the song "Ruby Dear" [*Naked*] had a Bo Diddley groove—that's incredibly flattering.

> "People feel that by virtue of being a guitar player, they have to have a swashbuckling, gung-ho approach to music."

You often create odd clashes by superimposing the major and minor modes.

I find a blue note whenever I can. I try to find the poignancy in any kind of lick. Not to get too poetic here, but I find a distinct lack of poignancy in most guitar playing I hear. It's as if people feel that by virtue of being a guitar player, they have to have this swashbuckling, gung-ho approach to music, an overblown, vulgar approach. I'd prefer a few notes played in the right place on one string. For example, I liked the melody at the end of "Stop Me If You've Heard This One Before," but it just felt a little too accomplished. I wanted it to sound like a punk player who couldn't play, so I fingered it on one string, right up and down the neck. I could have played it with harmonics or my teeth, or something clever, but the poignancy would have gone out of the melody.

You haven't had any formal theoretical training, yet your harmonic ideas are quite sophisticated.

The older I get, the more I realize that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. I try

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to avoid an overly theoretical approach at all costs. I like putting in parts that I don't understand, parts that just sound good by ear. On the Talking Heads' "Cool Water" [*Naked*], for example, I tuned a Gibson ES-335 12-string to an atonal drone against the track at David Byrne's encouragement. I didn't know what the tuning was, so I was playing all kinds of shapes that I never would have gotten into. We miked it acoustically, without an amp. I try to avoid thinking about scales, keys, and anything like that. I really like the idea of not knowing what I'm doing. Ultimately, I end up with something more original, a little more from the heart than the head. I know it doesn't work for everyone, but it's convenient for me because I'm quite a lazy person [*laughs*]. But that's one of the things I'm looking forward to about getting old and grey—I'm going to learn what I'm actually doing. But I think it would be the kiss of death to my songwriting if I did that right now.

At times, your style is reminiscent of African highlife guitar playing—those runs in parallel thirds, for example.

It's an instinctive love of a melody that people find undeniably cute. Another example is "The Boy With The Thorn In His Side" [*The Queen Is Dead*]. That was the first time I used a Strat on a record. I got it because I wanted a twangy Hank Marvin sound, but it ended up sounding quite highlify.

And then there was that submerged rockabilly strain.

That comes from a love of Chuck Berry's "You Can't Catch Me." I've been trying to capture that same swing—I'd better be careful, because he'll probably sue me if he reads this. The way he sang against the bass and drums sounded so great to me as a kid. That, plus the soul swing of "What'd I Say," by Ray Charles. The Stones' "19th Nervous Breakdown" is another one. It's a wicked groove—it really kicks. That's where my "rockabilly" influence comes from. Plus, obviously, the Elvis Presley *Sun Sessions*. Scotty Moore's playing on that is amazing.

A SELECTED JOHNNY MARR DISCOGRAPHY

With the Smiths (all on Sire, except as noted): The group's first two albums, *The Smiths* and *Meat Is Murder*, are packed with fine tunes and inspired playing, but their third, *The Queen Is Dead*, is their strongest, most unified LP. *Strangeways, Here We Come*, their final studio project, features elaborate, Beatles-esque production that sometimes downplays the guitar. *Louder Than Bombs* is an excellent collection of English singles, some of which also appear on *Hatful Of Hollow* (Rough Trade, U.K. import), along with live-in-the-studio alternate takes. *Rank* is a lively, if not particularly musical, live album. **With others:** the The, *Mind Bomb*, Epic; Talking Heads, *Naked*, Sire; Bryan Ferry, *Bete Noire*, Reprise; the Pretenders, "Windows Of The World" b/w "1969" (Sire single); Sandie Shaw, *Hello Angel*, Rough Trade (U.K. import); Kirsty MacColl, *Kite*, Virgin (U.K. import).

You've got a light touch with the whammy bar, when you use it.

I have an up-and-down relationship with the whammy bar. I've been getting into really interesting things with feedback, and I like to use the whammy bar with that. I'm really into false harmonics, like steel players and Nils Lofgren play with thumbpicks [see photo, above right]. You know, where you touch the string an octave higher than the note you're playing with the left hand? I like to pick a note with the volume turned down, and then swell it right up.

Do you have any tips for generating feedback?

I've started to realize the importance of where my cabinets are placed in relation to where I'm standing. And when I get to a venue that has a wooden stage, I say, "Yeah, great!" especially if it's hollow. But if it's a rubber-covered stage or—God forbid!—carpet, then I'm in trouble. I nearly always keep my little finger on the volume pot, so if I hear the glimmer of something really interesting, I turn the volume right up; if it's not happening, I turn it down and try to find another note. I don't use a volume pedal—it's all volume knob. That's inspired by Roy Buchanan, Nils Lofgren, and Jeff Beck.

You're using a lot of wah-wah these days.

I find that I approach it like a tone pot. The "whacka-whacka" sound was already

MARR'S GUITARS OF THE STARS

My main guitar with the The is a standard gun-metal blue Fender Stratocaster. It's an absolutely fantastic guitar with a really beautiful zing to it. The new Fenders are really good—I also have one of their '57 reissues and a 12-string, which I used on the Pretenders' "Windows Of The World." I used a new Fender Telecaster on the The's "The Beat(en) Generation"—Chrissie Hynde now owns it. On all my guitars, I change the volume pot for an old-style Precision bass knob because they're bigger and you can get a better grip on them. On tour, I put a couple of rubber bands around it for when my hands get wet.

My other favorite guitars are a red '59 Gibson ES-355, a '59 sunburst Les Paul, a custom green quilted-maple telecaster, and three Rickenbackers—my first 330, an amazing '66 wood-grain 330, and a 12-string that used to belong to Pete Townshend. I bought a few '63 Strats from John Entwistle. And then there's a '69 Strat I bought from Jeff Beck. I use Ernie Ball strings, gauged .010 to .046, on most of my guitars and I prefer Ernie Ball thumbpicks.

On tour, I'm using a MESA/Boogie Quad Preamp through Electro-Voice speakers in Marshall 2 x 10 cabinets (with the "Marshall" label taken off, of course—that will probably offend some readers). The power amp is a MESA/Boogie 295. I had intended to buy a 400, but it had a cold, hi-fi sound. The 295 is much more sympathetic to guitar.

From the effects send on the Boogie, I go into a T.C. Electronic 2290 and a Yamaha GEP50. I've got a Roland GP8, too—those guitar processors are okay if you use them together with another effect. And I've got the wonderful Eventide Harmonizer, which I use for some of the expansive stereo choruses. I haven't used my Roland GR-50 guitar synthesizer onstage yet, but I'm planning to. The controller is a GK-2.

At my studio, I've got a Roland JC-120 amp, one of the new Fender Twins (they sound great when they're turned up), a Fender Showman, and an old Fender Bassman, which I really like for soloing and practicing.

I use a Jim Dunlop Cry Baby wah-wah pedal, and I have the same problems that everyone has with those things. They have the best natural travel of all the wahs, but they're really noisy and they break down all the time. I've had an LED put into mine so I can tell when it's on.

—Johnny Marr

done in the best possible way on "Theme From Shaft," and then there's Hendrix, of course. Now, I find myself keeping my foot on it all the time, just letting it out slowly without thinking about it too much. Also, you can leave it on, opened slightly, without even touching it—that gives you a completely different tonal range. The "Shoplifters" break was the first time that I really discovered that. And if the filter is open in just the right place, you can get a harmonic to sing like a bird.

Is the music you're making with Bernard Sumner heavily sequenced?

Yes. I really like dance music, especially in the classic sense—the Fatback Band, the Ohio Players, and stuff like that. If it's a good song, I'll play alongside machines any day. I'm looking forward to coming to grips with sticking guitars on electro music. Also, it confuses people about what I'm doing, which I'm quite into. I don't believe in painting myself into a corner anymore, and I'm open to any kind of technique. ∎

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Title of Publication: GUITAR PLAYER.
Date of Filing: October 1, 1989.
Frequency of Issue: Monthly.
Annual Subscription Price: $23.95.
Known Office of Publication: Miller Freeman Publications, Inc., 20085 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014.
Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher: Miller Freeman Publications, Inc., 500 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94105.
Publisher: Charles C. Baake
Editor: Tom Wheeler
Managing Editor: Tom Mulhern
Owner: Dalton Communications, Inc., 1123 Broadway, New York, NY 10010. Peter Betuel (same address), Gloria Betuel (same address), Jonathan Betuel (same address).
Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1% or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: Meritor Savings Bank (1234 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19107), Fertility & Genetics Research (135 S. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60603), Paulson Investment Company (811 S.W. Front Ave., Portland, OR 97201).

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (Signed) Patricia J. Cameron, Business Manager

Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average Number of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual Number of Copies Per Single Issue Published Nearest Filing Date
Total Number of Copies Printed (net press run):	174,712	209,200
Paid Circulation (dealers, carriers, vendors, counters):	87,725	99,764
Mail Subscription:	42,258	58,069
Total Paid Circulation:	129,983	157,833
Free Distribution:	1,499	1,490
Total Distribution:	131,482	159,323
Office use, left over, spoiled, unaccounted:	3,817	5,055
Return from news agents:	39,413	44,822
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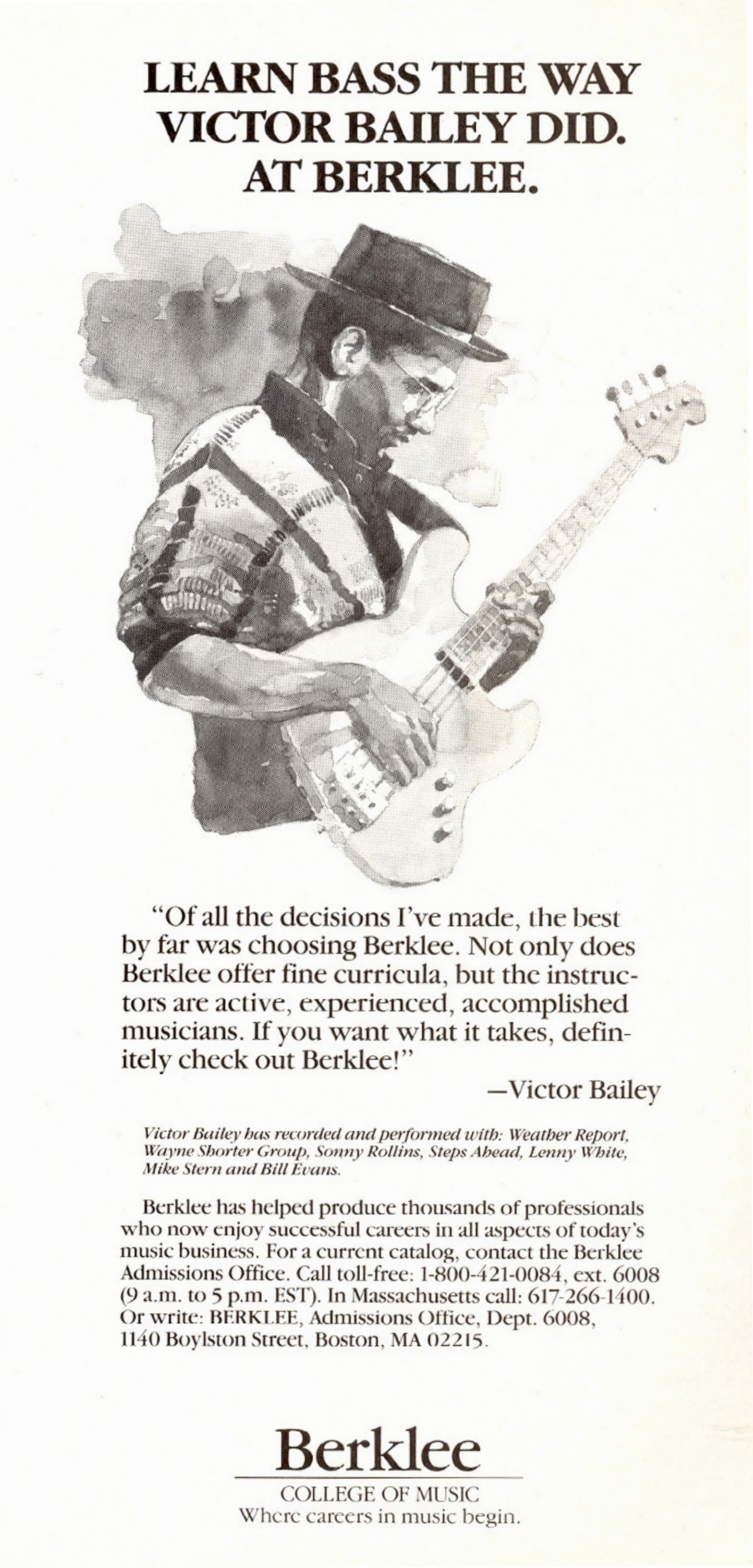

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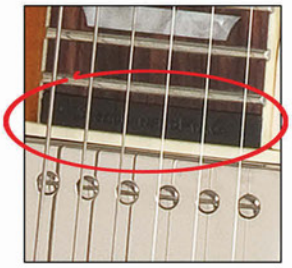

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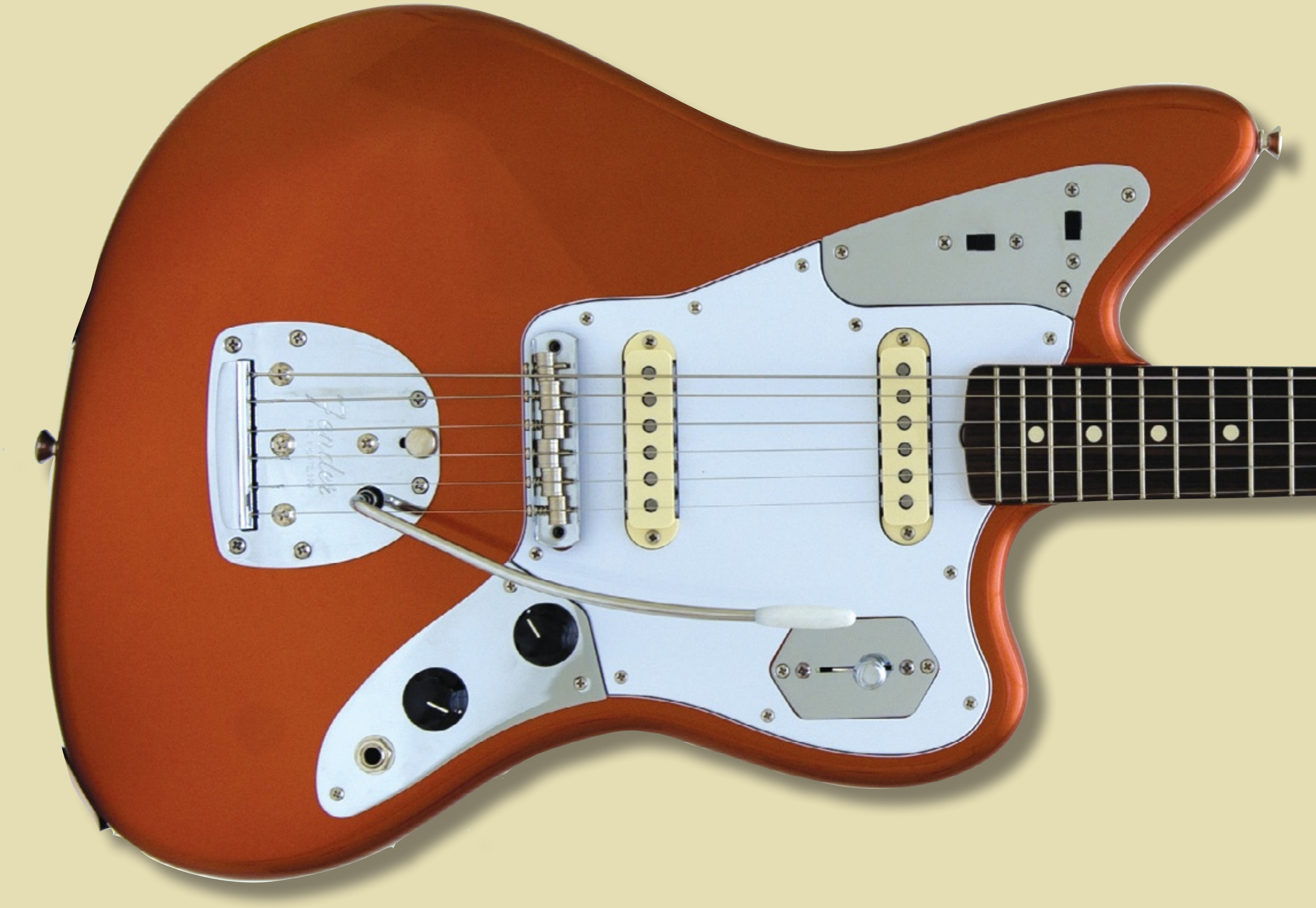


Fender Johnny Marr Jaguar

TESTED BY MICHAEL MOLENDA

I'VE ALWAYS FEARED JAGUARS. They look cool, but seem pretty wonky, and I'd heard all the stories about wrestling sounds from the recalcitrant buggers. So although I totally dig Johnny Marr's guitar playing—and the fact his new Fender Johnny Marr Jaguar has a spectacular metallic-rust finish—I was pretty nervous about reviewing the beast. Well, shame on me. I feel like the subject of a song that could have been written by Marr's former band, the Smiths: "Don't You Feel Stupid When You Fear Things You Know Nothing About." After playing the guitar at recording sessions, rehearsals, and gigs, the reality is that Marr's turbo-charged Jaguar is a thing of beauty—cosmetically, ergonomically, and sonically.

Marr picked up an ailing Fender Jaguar during a 2005 songwriting session with Modest Mouse's Isaac Brock, and fell in love with it. But even as he appreciated that the Jag forced him to avoid bluesy bits, pentatonic constructions, and heavy rock gestures, he dreamed of a more evolved iteration of the model. Working with Fender's team, bouncing ideas off his former band mates in the Cribs, and conferring with his long-time guitar tech Bill Puplett, Marr re-imagined the Jag's neck, body, bridge, pickups, switching system, and tremolo. A whole boatload of good came from the collaborations.

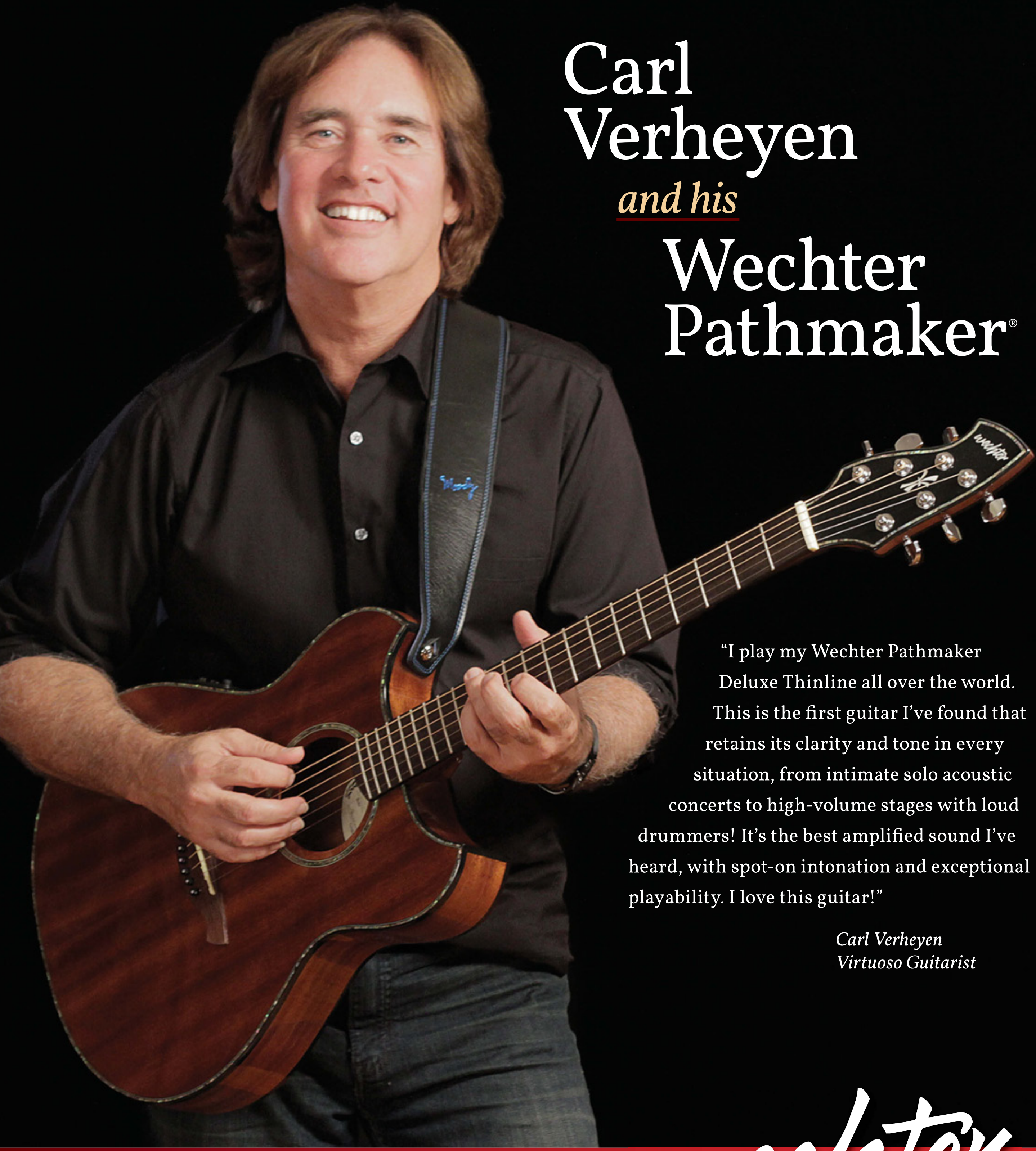
While the Marr may look like a twee, arty guitar, you could toss it into the hands of the macho action heroes starring in *The Expendables 2* and see damage d one—not to the Jag, but to the bad guys. It's tough. The refreshed body contours (copied from a 1954 Strat) hug your torso nicely whether you are sitting, standing, or leaping across stages. I loved the Marr's wider neck (based

on a ’65 Jag), which felt amazing, and didn’t induce any playing fatigue. Although the tremolo looks delicate, it exhibited no slack, was responsive in a Bigsby-like way, and returned to pitch accurately. The Marr’s fit-and-finish is awesome, with just a slightly off-kilter pickup selector plate thwarting absolute perfection. While classic Jags were either loved or loathed for their quirky switches, the Marr’s 4-position pickup selector (which includes a neck-and-bridge-in-series position that delivers a humbucker-like response and a boost in output level) and two high-pass switches are easy to use, and produce a wealth of timbres, from chunky lows to sweet mids and airy highs.

Now, the Marr Jaguar *does* mess with you if crave high-gain saturation. In fact, it kind of dares you to get beyond anything but gritty. I dug the challenge, and, like Marr himself, I was grateful the guitar nudged me out of my comfort zones. It forced me to craft cleaner, stranger, and more precise parts that worked best with the guitar’s dry, low-output articulation. I must salute the brilliance of a model that plays so well, but simultaneously challenges you to evolve, adapt, and get more inventive. As such, it’s a near mirror image of its creator.

SPECIFICATIONS

CONTACT	Fender Musical Instruments, fender.com
MODEL	Fender Johnny Marr Jaguar
PRICE	$2,419 retail/$1,649 street
NUT WIDTH	1.65"
NECK	Maple, bolt-on (based on Marr’s ’65 Jaguar)
FRETBOARD	Rosewood, 24" scale, 7.25" radius
FRETS	22
TUNERS	Vintage style
BODY	Alder
BRIDGE	Jaguar with Mustang saddles and vintage-style “floating” tremolo
PICKUPS	Two custom-wound Bare Knuckle Johnny Marr pickups
CONTROLS	Master Volume, Master Tone, 4-way selector, universal Bright switch, Bright switch for pickup-selector position 4
FACTORY STRINGS	Fender Nickel-Plated Steel Super 250R, .010-.046
WEIGHT	8.5 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Stunning finish. Bold, articulate tones. Comfy player. Wonderfully idiosyncratic.
CONCERNS	Wonderfully idiosyncratic.



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Step Behind the Scenes with John Petrucci and Learn Wicked Warm-Ups, Mesmerizing Meter Mash-Ups, and Dramatic New Dream Theater Riffs

BY VINCENT DEMASI

When playing his trademark, blazing fast alternate-picking runs, Petrucci holds his Dunlop Jazz III between his thumb and the side of his index finger. He strikes the strings at a slight angle, anchoring his picking hand by wrapping his pinky around the bottom of the bridge pickup. When applying his stinging left hand vibrato to notes, Petrucci often cups the heel of his picking hand against the bridge saddles to dampen any unwanted string ringage.

WHETHER IT'S TRADING GRAVITY-defying licks with the likes of Satriani, Vai, and Gilbert on the G3 tour, or plowing through odd-metered passages at breakneck tempo during Dream Theater's epic three-hour-plus concerts, John Petrucci regularly puts himself in playing situations that are not only musically challenging, but physically demanding as well. "Obviously, music should be first and foremost about expression," declares the axe master, "but there's a definite physical conditioning component to it. I can't just not practice for a week, drink a few beers, hop on stage, and expect to play well. I approach a concert like a gymnast approaches a meet. If you're gonna do your routines perfectly, you've got to work on the techniques involved in those routines."

Okay class, you heard the prog-metal maestro. This ain't no blues lesson. This is about hitting the 'shed to shed some of that fretting-hand flab, so get out your 6-strings and metronomes, and allow Petrucci to be your personal guitar trainer. The Long Island guitar hero's initial advice for shred school freshmen may not exactly be a revelation but it's so sound, it bears repeating: "If you want to play fast you've got to practice slow. Start out playing the licks and exercises at around 60 beats per minute until you can play them cleanly and accurately. Only then should you increase the speed."

MAIDEN VOYAGE

Monstrously wide vibrato—a prominent aspect of Petrucci's style—is something the guitarist developed as a kid. "I used to play my Iron

Ex. 1

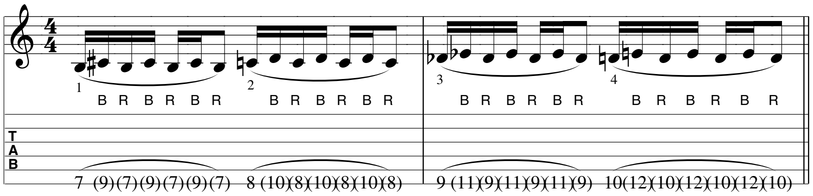


PHOTO: VINCENT DEMASI

“Ask the four of us how we count the more intricately timed passages, and you’ll get four different answers—all of them equally correct.”
—John Petrucci

PHOTO: ©FERNANDO ACEVES / RETNA

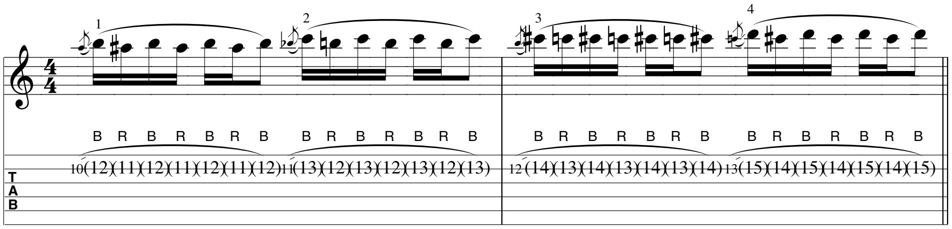
Maiden records at slow speed to try and learn the licks, and I noticed that whenever Adrian Smith ended a phrase you'd hear this ree-owr, ree-owr, ree-owr sound as his note trailed off," says Petrucci. "It finally clicked that he was rapidly bending the note up and down to get that effect." **Ex. 1** stems from a vibrato exercise Petrucci developed years ago and has been doing ever since. Whole-step bends in rapid succession may not be Club Med for your poor little 3rd and 4th fingers—typically the weakest digits on the fretting hand—but these calisthenics will train you to accurately bend into any note at any time with any finger. A slight variation on this drill, **Ex. 2** starts each vibrato series with a whole-step grace-note bend and follows it with several half-step bends and releases. For best results, practice these exercises on all six strings and at various fretboard positions.

PHRASE SHIFTING

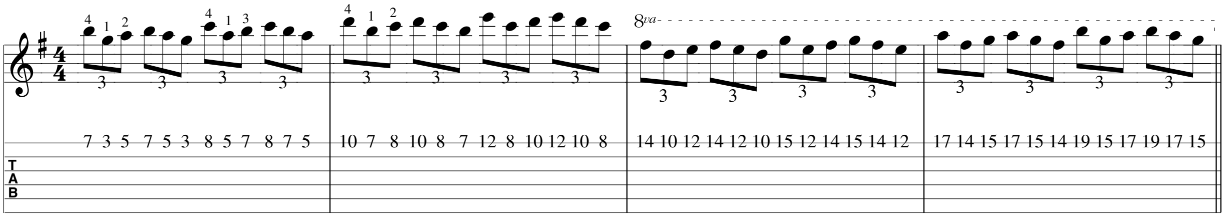
"Phrasing is just as important as note selection," says Petrucci, "and phrasing a line all on one string will give it a different quality than playing it across the neck, so it's important to practice scales linearly as well as in position." The upwardly mobile **Ex. 3** is built on a six-note pattern in *G* major that ascends the high-*E*, but can be practiced in different keys on different strings. **Ex. 4** stretches a descending incarnation of this pattern across the first and second strings. Watch the fingering in the last three measures or you'll wind up playing some notes that are out of key. Another diatonic two-string pattern, **Ex. 5** is multi-functional—it works in *B* Phrygian, *G* major, and *E* natural minor—and can be articulated legato as shown, or played

The Long Island Strangler—John Petrucci practicing vibrato, testing the tensile strength of his strings and tendons alike.

Ex. 2


1
2
3
4
B R B R B R B B R B R B R B B R B R B R B B R B R B R B
10 (12)(11)(12)(11)(12)(11)(12) 11 (13)(12)(13)(12)(13)(12)(13) 12 (14)(13)(14)(13)(14)(13)(14) 13 (15)(14)(15)(14)(15)(14)(15)
T
A
B

Ex. 3


4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 2
8va
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
7 3 5 7 5 3 8 5 7 8 7 5
10 7 8 10 8 7 12 8 10 12 10 8
14 10 12 14 12 10 15 12 14 15 14 12
17 14 15 17 15 14 19 15 17 19 17 15
T
A
B

Ex. 4

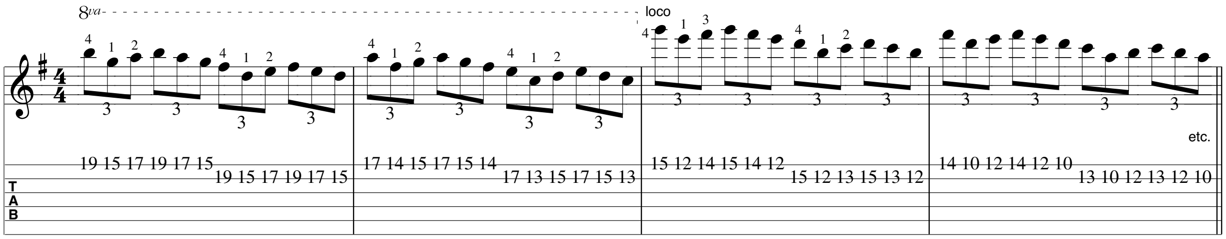

8va
loco
4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 2
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
etc.
19 15 17 19 17 15 19 15 17 19 17 15
17 14 15 17 15 14 17 13 15 17 15 13
15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 13 15 13 12
14 10 12 14 12 10 13 10 12 13 12 10
T
A
B

PHOTO: VINCENT DEMASI

entirely with alternate picking. Make sure to lead the position changes with your 1st finger on the way up and with your 4th finger on the way down and you won't trip over your own fingers.

LUCKY 13

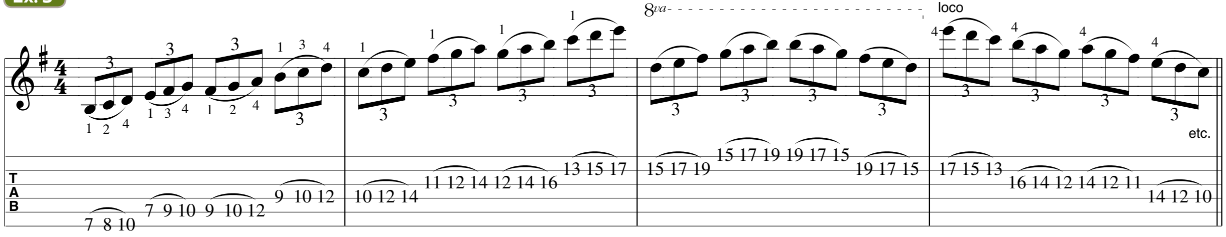
"Building great technique is crucial but it's only half the battle," warns Petrucci. "You've got to *apply* what you know." **Ex. 6**, one of the main themes from "In the Presence of Enemies Pt. 1," from Dream Theater's latest CD *Systematic Chaos* [Roadrunner], combines two Petrucci staples—single-string linear motion and metric modulation. It may take a while to get used to hearing the 13-count pattern broken into alternating measures of 7/4 and 6/4, but eventually the lick will roll off your fingers faster than you can say "triskaidekaphobia."

Imagine a sonic love child of Metallica's "Master of Puppets" and Rush's "Natural Science" and you might have Petrucci's riff to "Constant Motion," shown broken into

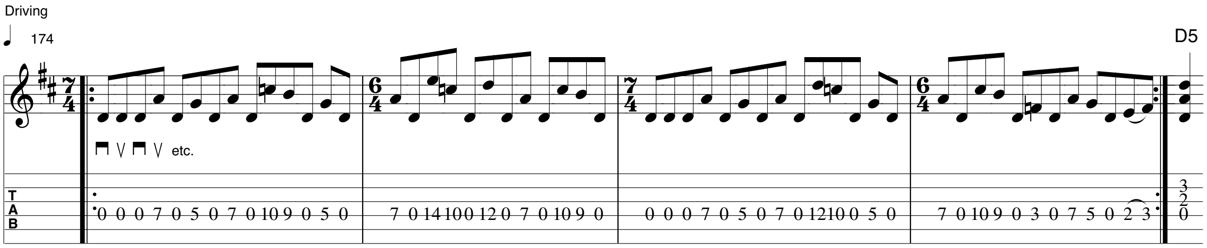
CLICK HERE
DiMarzio
0:15 / 8:03

PETRUCCI SHREDS IN THE STUDIO AND TALKS ABOUT HIS GEAR.

Ex. 5


8va
loco
etc.
T
A
B
7 8 10
7 9 10 9 10 12
9 10 12
10 12 14
11 12 14 12 14 16
13 15 17
15 17 19
15 17 19 19 17 15
19 17 15
17 15 13
16 14 12 14 12 11
14 12 10

Ex. 6

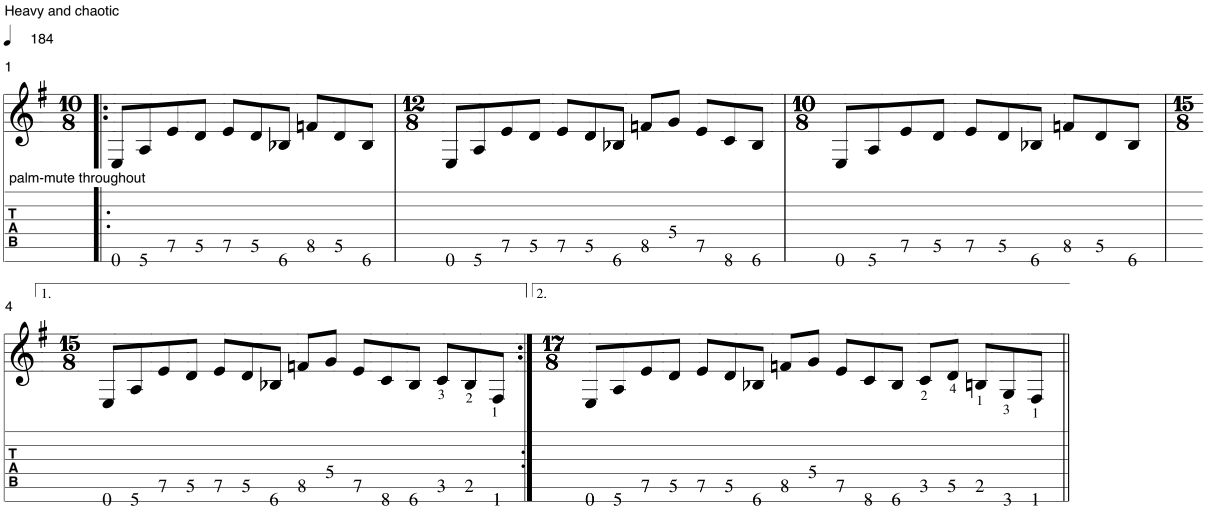

Driving
♩ 174
D5
etc.
T
A
B
0 0 0 7 0 5 0 7 0 10 9 0 5 0
7 0 14 10 0 12 0 7 0 10 9 0
0 0 0 7 0 5 0 7 0 12 10 0 5 0
7 0 10 9 0 3 0 7 5 0 2 3
3 2 0

two metrically identical parts in **Examples 7** and **8**. "I hear this song as a quarter-note pulse with a few stray eighth-notes tacked on at the end," he says. "But it's possible to count it as straight eighths. Often you can ask the four instrumentalists in Dream Theater how we count some of the more intricately timed passages, and you'll get four different answers—all of them equally correct."

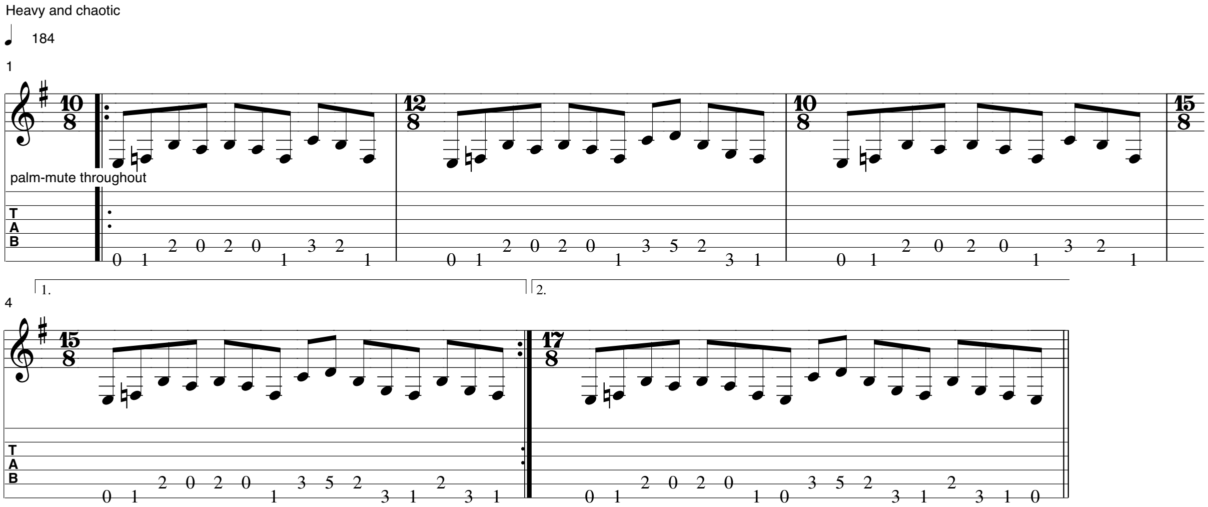
SWEET DREAMS

Lest you perceive Petrucci to be only about speedy scales, counting conundrums, and linear logic, the melodic arpeggios from the verse of "The Ministry of Lost Souls" [**Ex. 9**] show his moving, lyrical approach to harmony. Flavored with lush color tones such as the ♯11 in the *Am♯11* chord in the first bar (a *D♯* that reappears as the ♯5 in *Gaug5*), this simple chord sequence would surely get a passing grade from Bach.

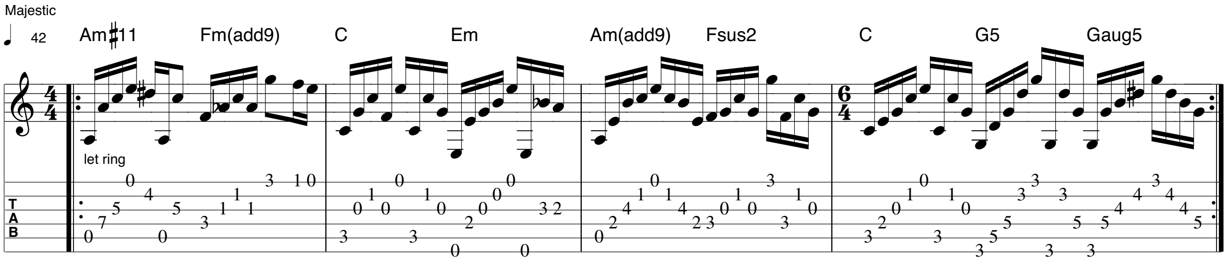
Ex. 7


Heavy and chaotic
♩ 184
1
palm-mute throughout
4
1.
2.

Ex. 8


Heavy and chaotic
♩ 184
1
palm-mute throughout
4
1.
2.

Ex. 9


Majestic
♩ 42
Am♯11
Fm(add9)
C
Em
Am(add9)
Fsus2
C
G5
Gaug5
let ring

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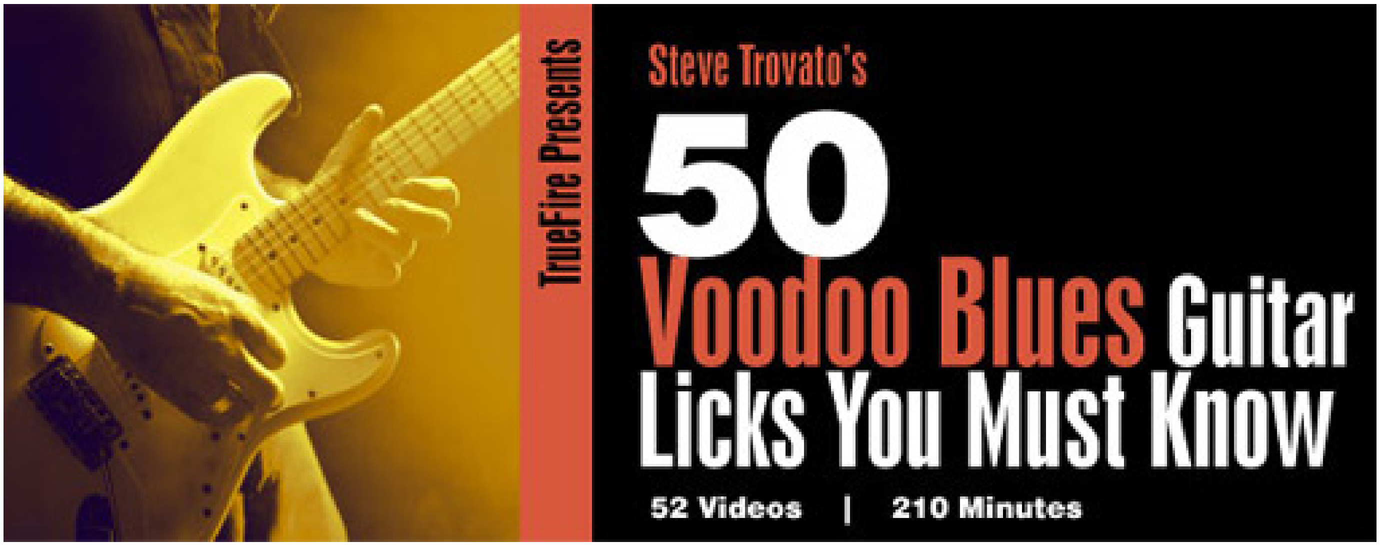

"Let me live 'neath your spell. Do do that voodoo that you do so well." Cole Porter didn't play guitar but he did recognize the power of voodoo. Thankfully Steve Trovato not only plays guitar but is also a highly respected educator and witch doctor of the blues.

Mix up equal portions of Trovato's Jumbo Gumbo, Mamba Juice, Hell Hound elixir and Tiger's Blood and then buckle up for frequent out-of-body experiences where your hands start doing things on the fretboard that your head only dreamed of doing before. That's the kind of voodoo you'll do after digging into Trovato's 50 Voodoo Blues Licks You MUST Know.

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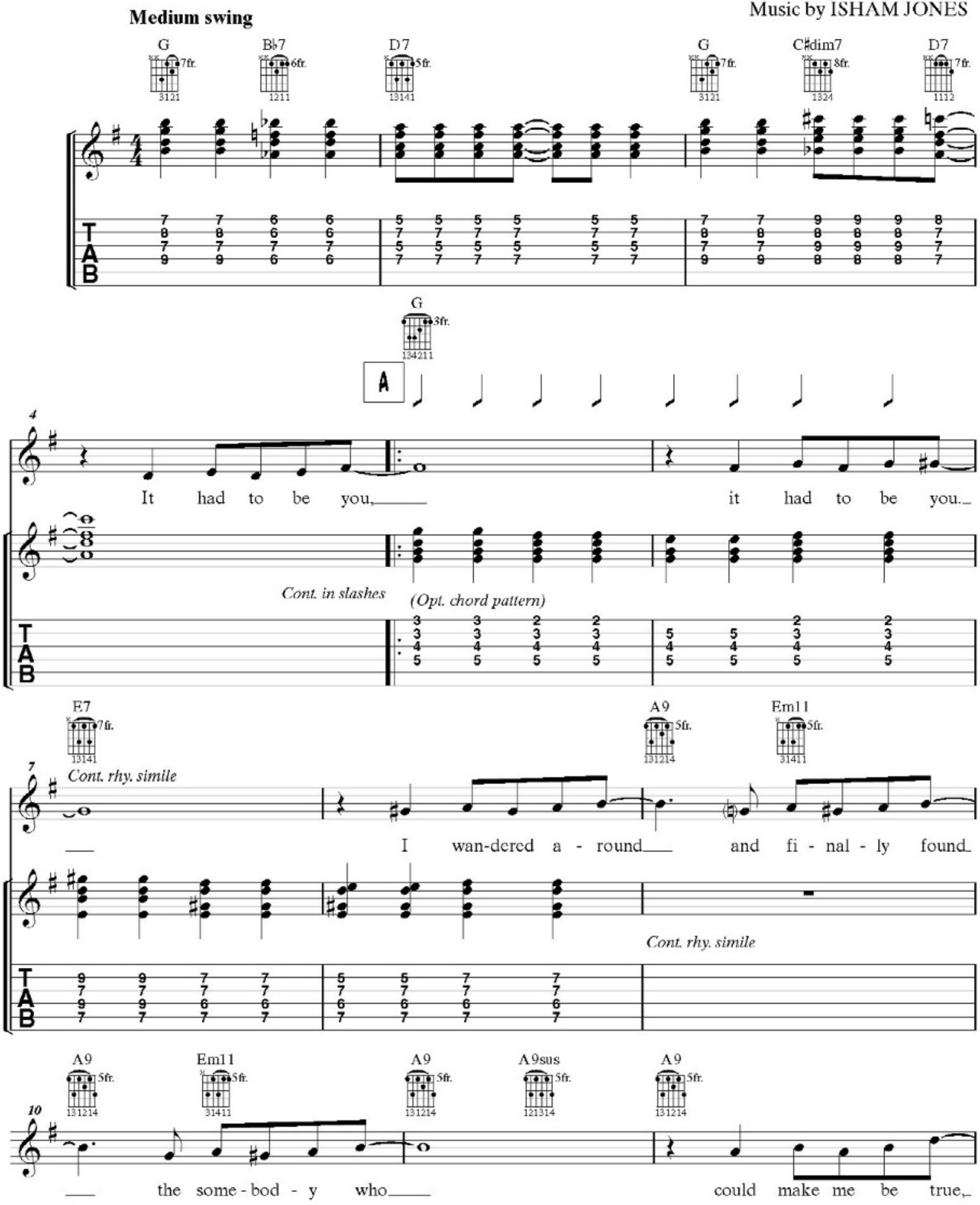
IT HAD TO BE YOU

Words by GUS KAHN
Music by ISHAM JONES


Medium swing
G
B♭7
D7
G
C♯dim7
D7
G
A
Cont. in slashes
(Opt. chord pattern)
It had to be you, it had to be you.
E7
A9
Em11
Cont. rhy. simile
I wan-dered a - round and fi - nal - ly found
A9
Em11
A9
A9sus
A9
the some-bod - y who could make me be true,

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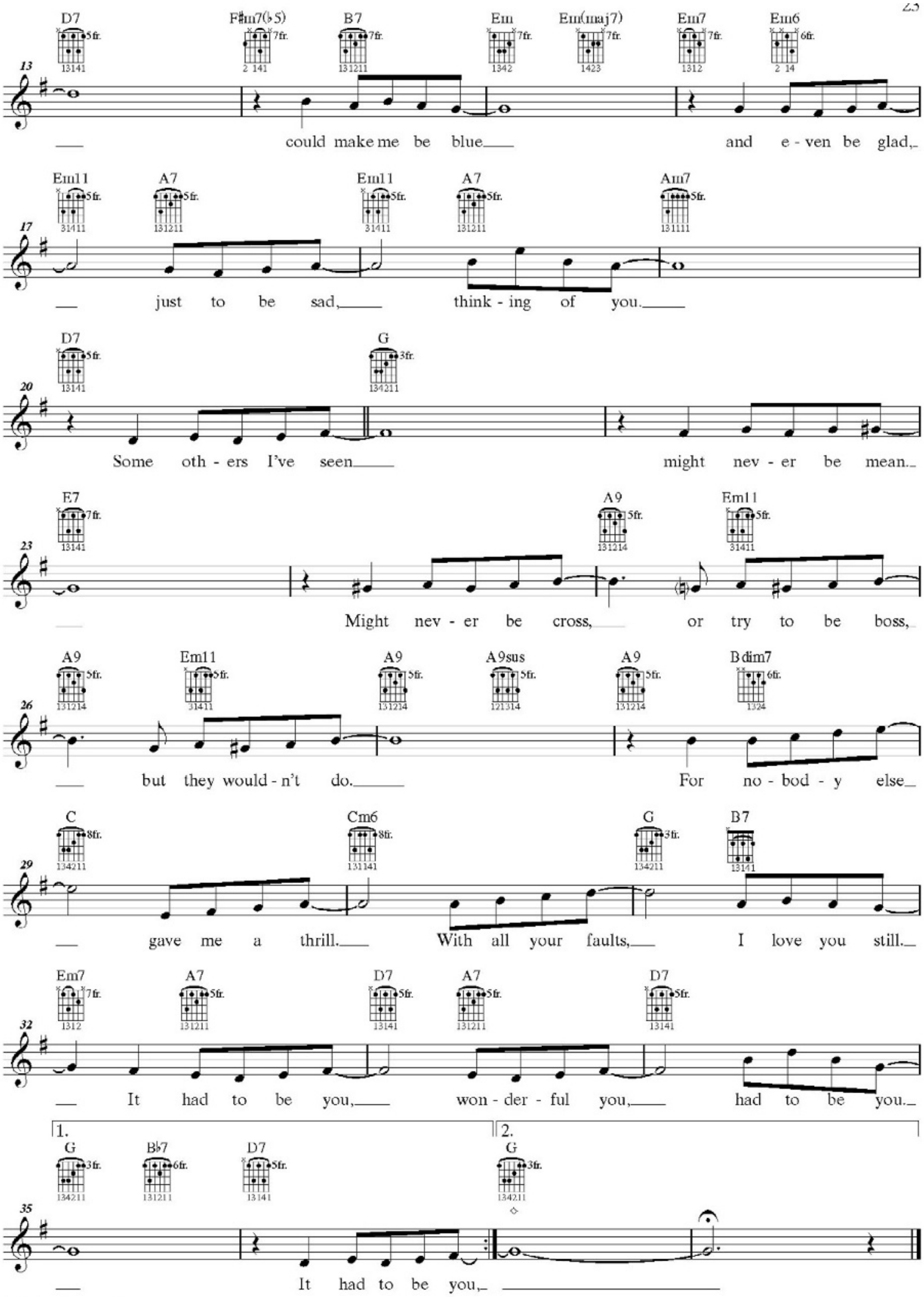
23
D7 F♯m7(♭5) B7 Em Em(maj7) Em7 Em6
13
could make me be blue and e - ven be glad,
Em11 A7 Em11 A7 Am7
17
just to be sad, think - ing of you.
D7 G
20
Some oth - ers I've seen might nev - er be mean.
E7 A9 Em11
23
Might nev - er be cross, or try to be boss,
A9 Em11 A9 A9sus A9 Bdim7
26
but they would - n't do. For no - bod - y else
C Cm6 G B7
29
gave me a thrill. With all your faults, I love you still.
Em7 A7 D7 A7 D7
32
It had to be you, won - der - ful you, had to be you.
1. 2.
G B♭7 D7 G
35
It had to be you,

It Had to Be You - 2 - 2

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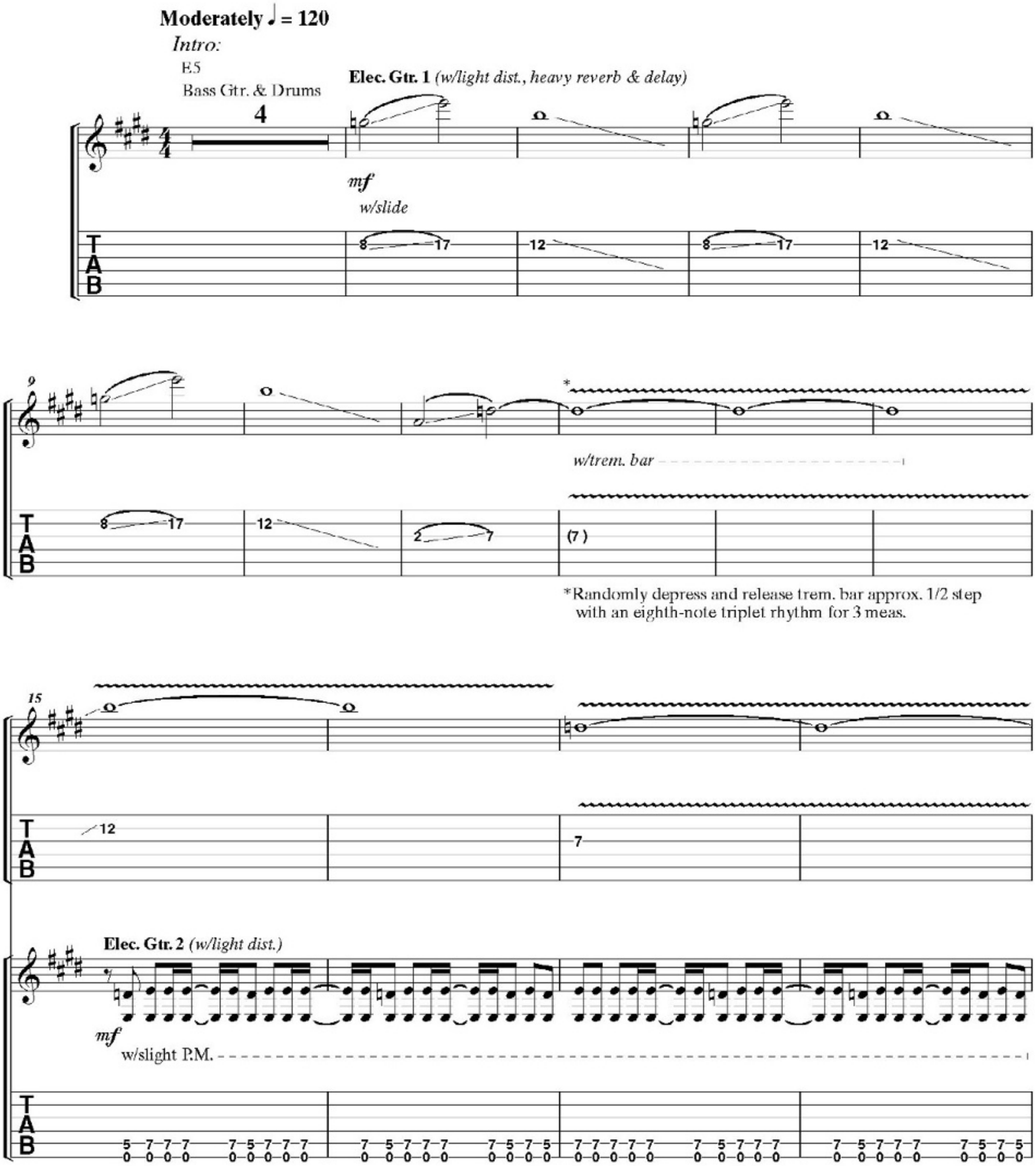
SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD

Lyrics by NEIL PEART
Music by GEDDY LEE and ALEX LIFESON



Moderately ♩ = 120
Intro:
E5
Bass Gtr. & Drums
4
Elec. Gtr. 1 (w/light dist., heavy reverb & delay)
mf
w/slide
T
A
B
8
17
12
9
2
7
(7)
w/trem. bar
15
Elec. Gtr. 2 (w/light dist.)
mf
w/slight P.M.

*Randomly depress and release trem. bar approx. 1/2 step with an eighth-note triplet rhythm for 3 meas.

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 1

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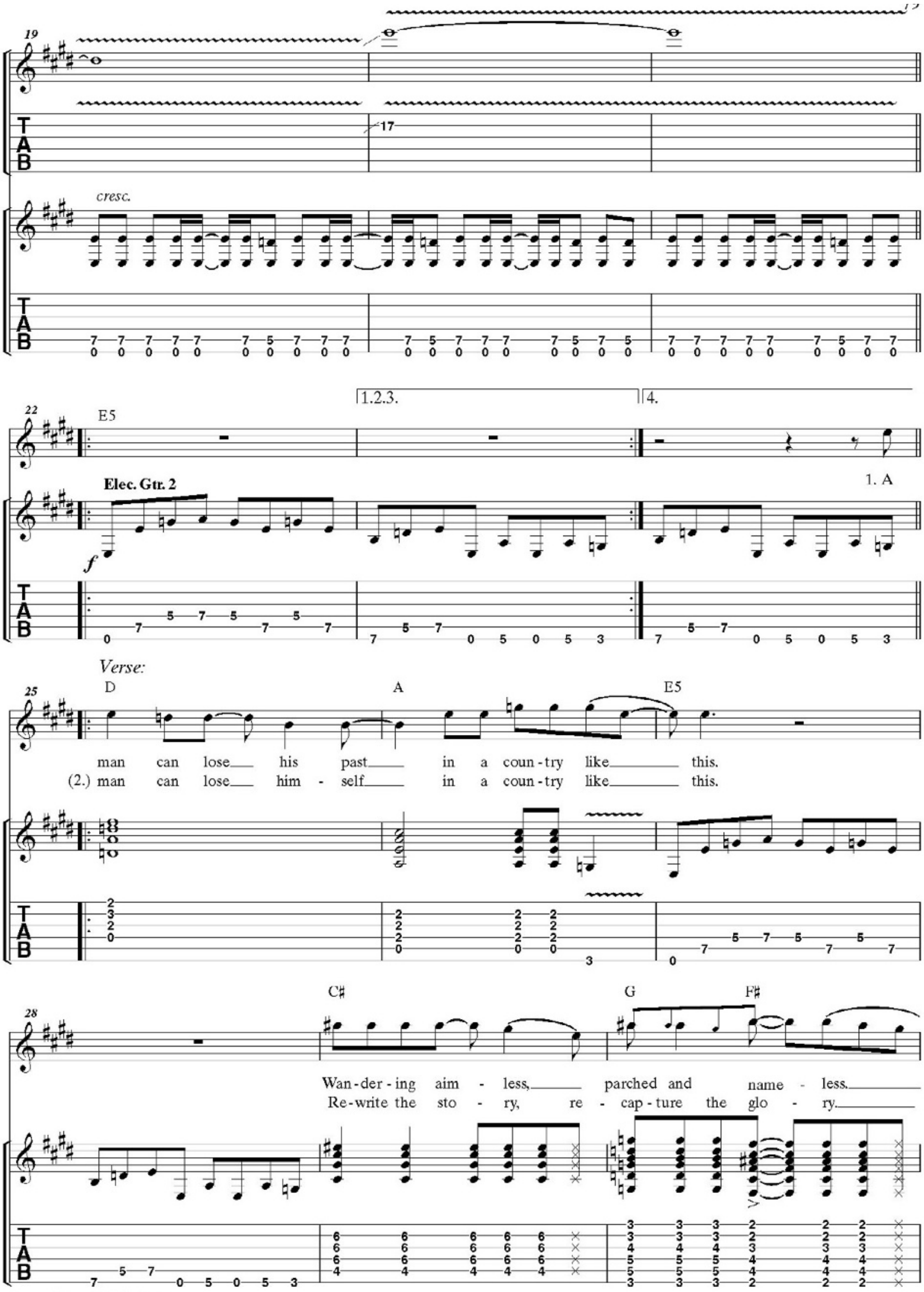
19
T
A
B
17
cresc.
22
E5
1.2.3.
4.
Elec. Gtr. 2
f
1. A
Verse:
25
D
A
E5
man can lose his past in a coun-try like this.
(2.) man can lose him-self in a coun-try like this.
28
C♯
G
F♯
Wan-der-ing aim-less, parched and name-less.
Re-write the sto-ry, re-cap-ture the glo-ry.

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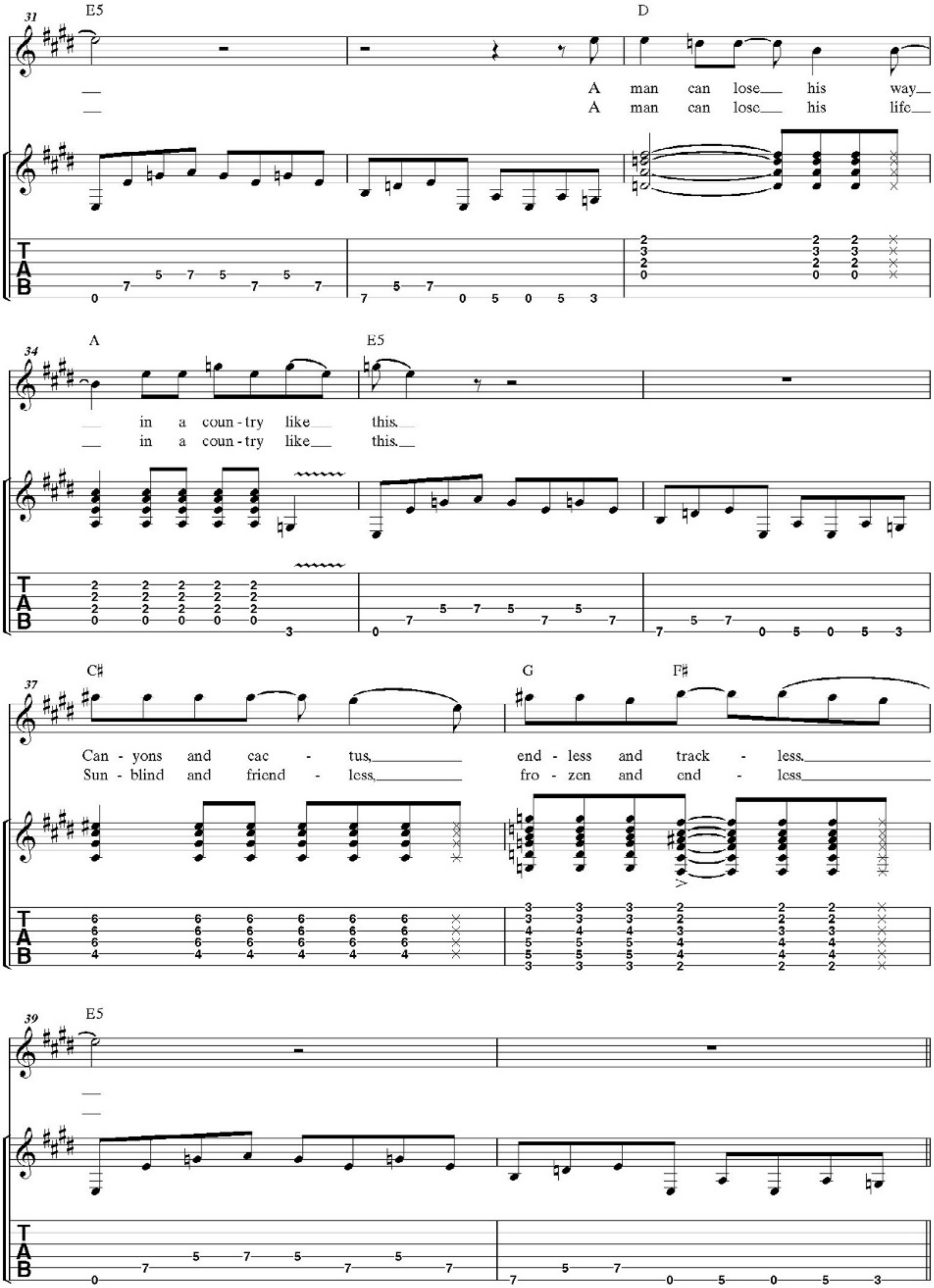
31
E5
D
A man can lose his way
A man can lose his life
34
A
E5
in a coun-try like this.
in a coun-try like this.
37
C♯
G
F♯
Can-yons and cac-tus, end-less and track-less.
Sun-blind and friend-less, fro-zen and end-less
39
E5

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 3

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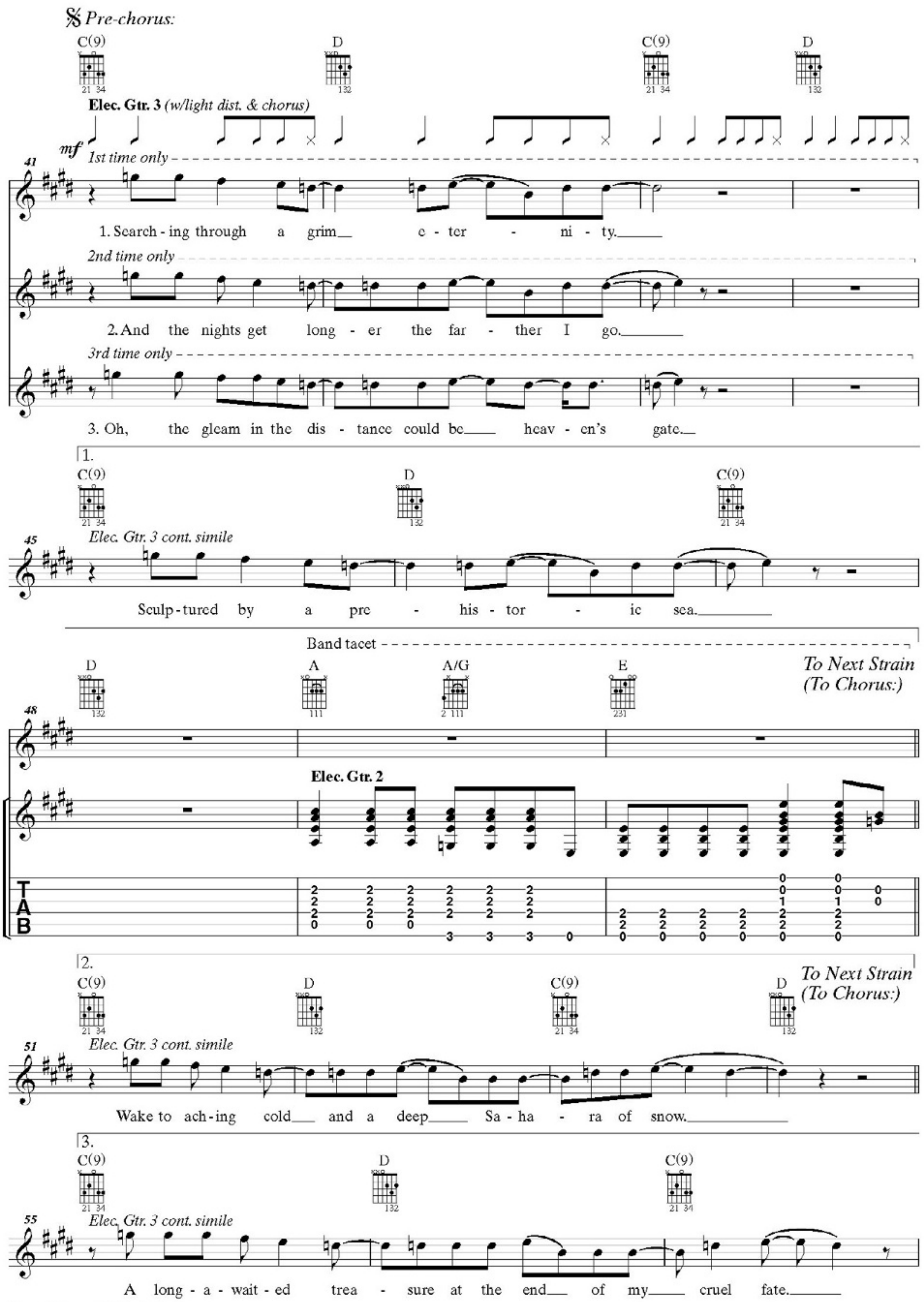
𝄋 Pre-chorus:
C(9)
D
C(9)
D
Elec. Gtr. 3 (w/light dist. & chorus)
mf
41
1st time only
1. Search - ing through a grim e - ter - ni - ty.
2nd time only
2. And the nights get long - er the far - ther I go.
3rd time only
3. Oh, the gleam in the dis - tance could be heav - en's gate.
1.
C(9)
D
C(9)
45
Elec. Gtr. 3 cont. simile
Sculp - tured by a pre - his - tor - ic sea.
Band tacet
D
A
A/G
E
To Next Strain
(To Chorus:)
48
Elec. Gtr. 2
T
A
B
2.
C(9)
D
C(9)
D
To Next Strain
(To Chorus:)
51
Elec. Gtr. 3 cont. simile
Wake to ach - ing cold and a deep Sa - ha - ra of snow.
3.
C(9)
D
C(9)
55
Elec. Gtr. 3 cont. simile
A long - a - wait - ed trea - sure at the end of my cruel fate.

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 4

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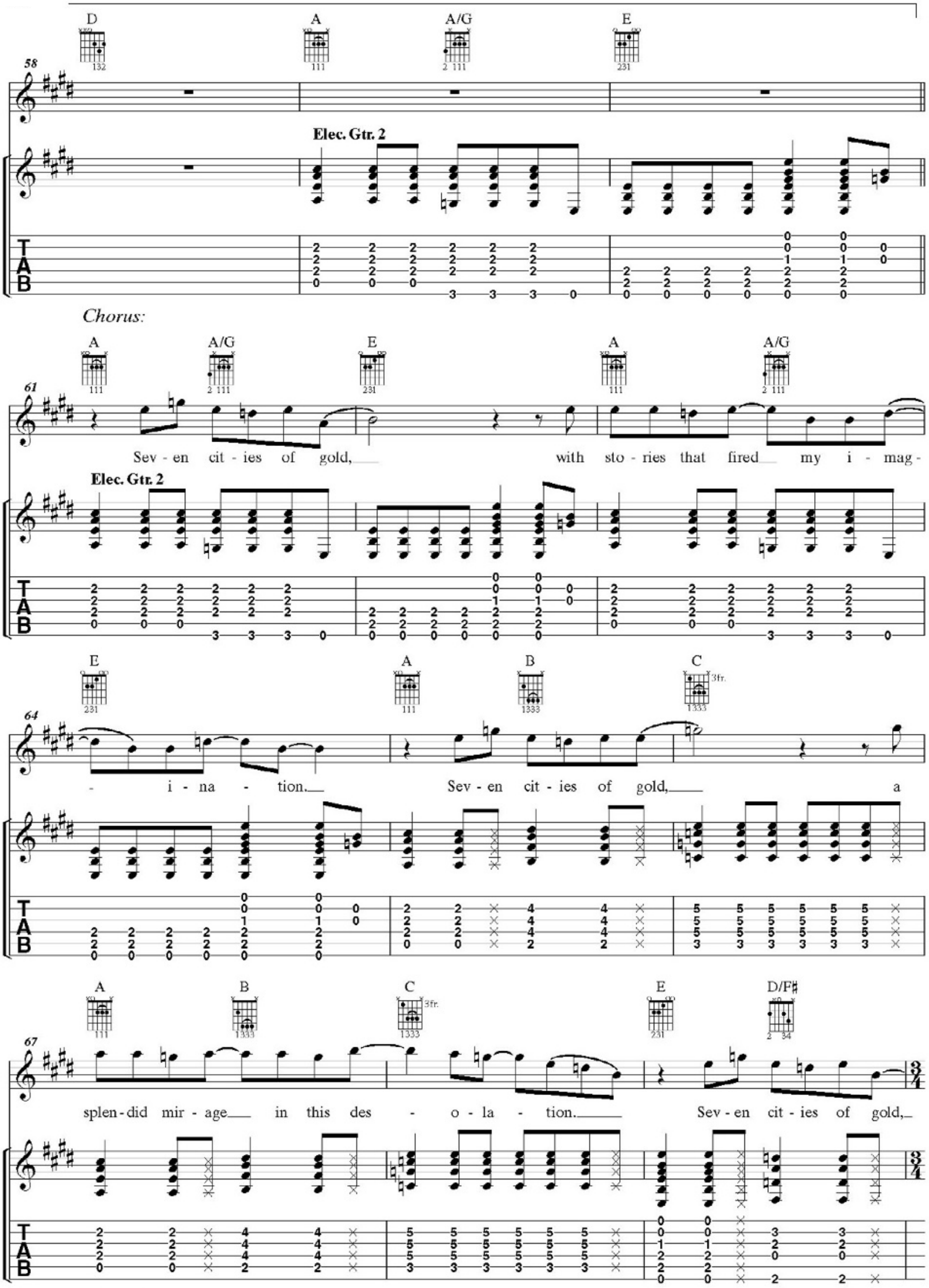
D
A
A/G
E
58
Elec. Gtr. 2
Chorus:
A
A/G
E
A
A/G
61
Sev - en cit - ies of gold, with sto - ries that fired my i - mag -
Elec. Gtr. 2
E
A
B
C
3fr.
64
- i - na - tion. Sev - en cit - ies of gold, a
A
B
C
3fr.
E
D/F♯
67
splen - did mir - age in this des - o - la - tion. Sev - en cit - ies of gold,
T
A
B

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 5

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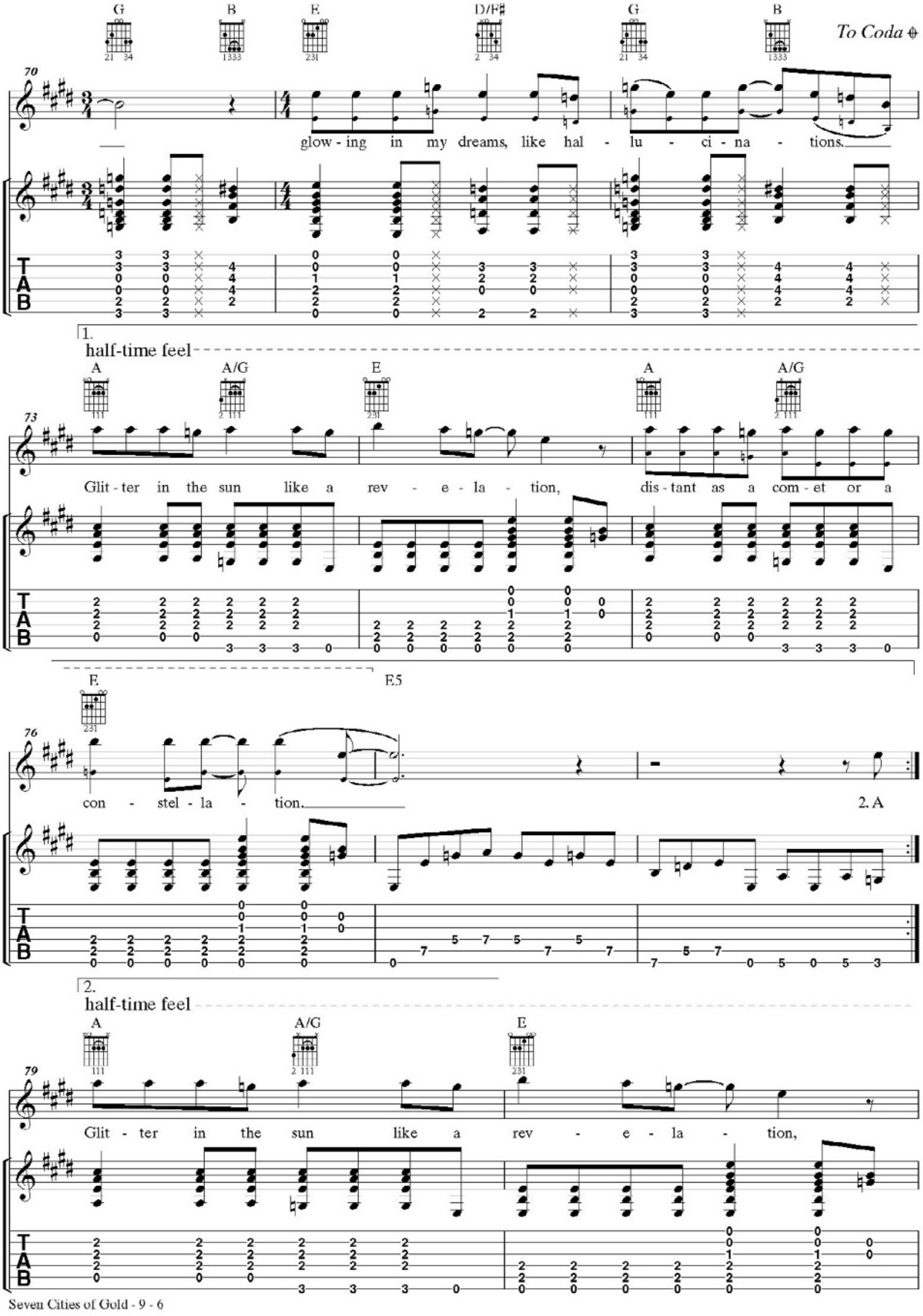
G
B
E
D/F♯
G
B
To Coda 𝄌
70
glow - ing in my dreams, like hal - lu - ci - na - tions.
1.
half-time feel
A
A/G
E
A
A/G
73
Glit - ter in the sun like a rev - e - la - tion, dis - tant as a com - et or a
E
E5
76
con - stel - la - tion.
2. A
2.
half-time feel
A
A/G
E
79
Glit - ter in the sun like a rev - e - la - tion,
T
A
B

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 6

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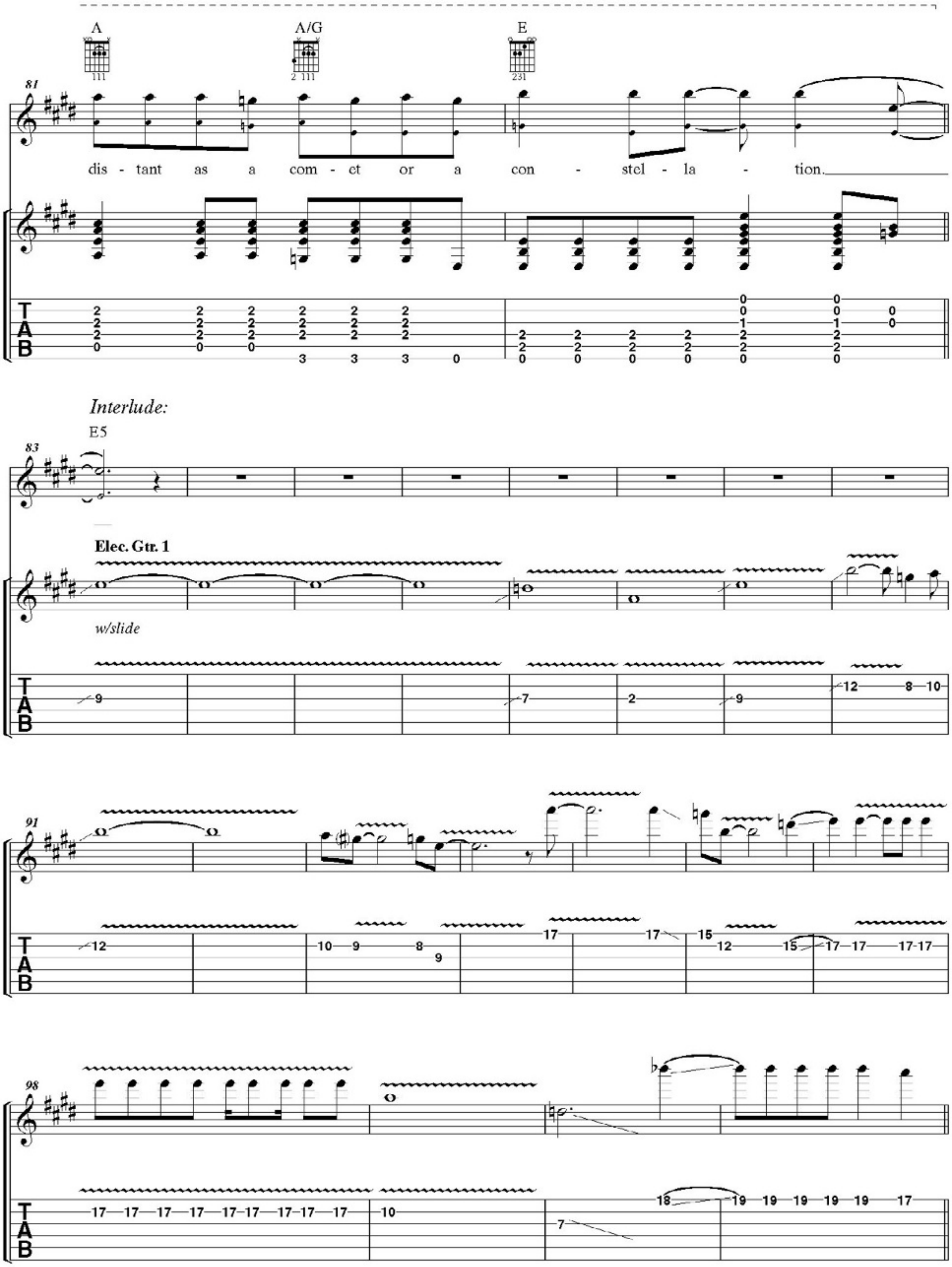
A
A/G
E
111
2 111
231
81
dis - tant as a com - et or a con - stel - la - tion.
Interlude:
E5
83
Elec. Gtr. 1
w/slide
91
98
TAB

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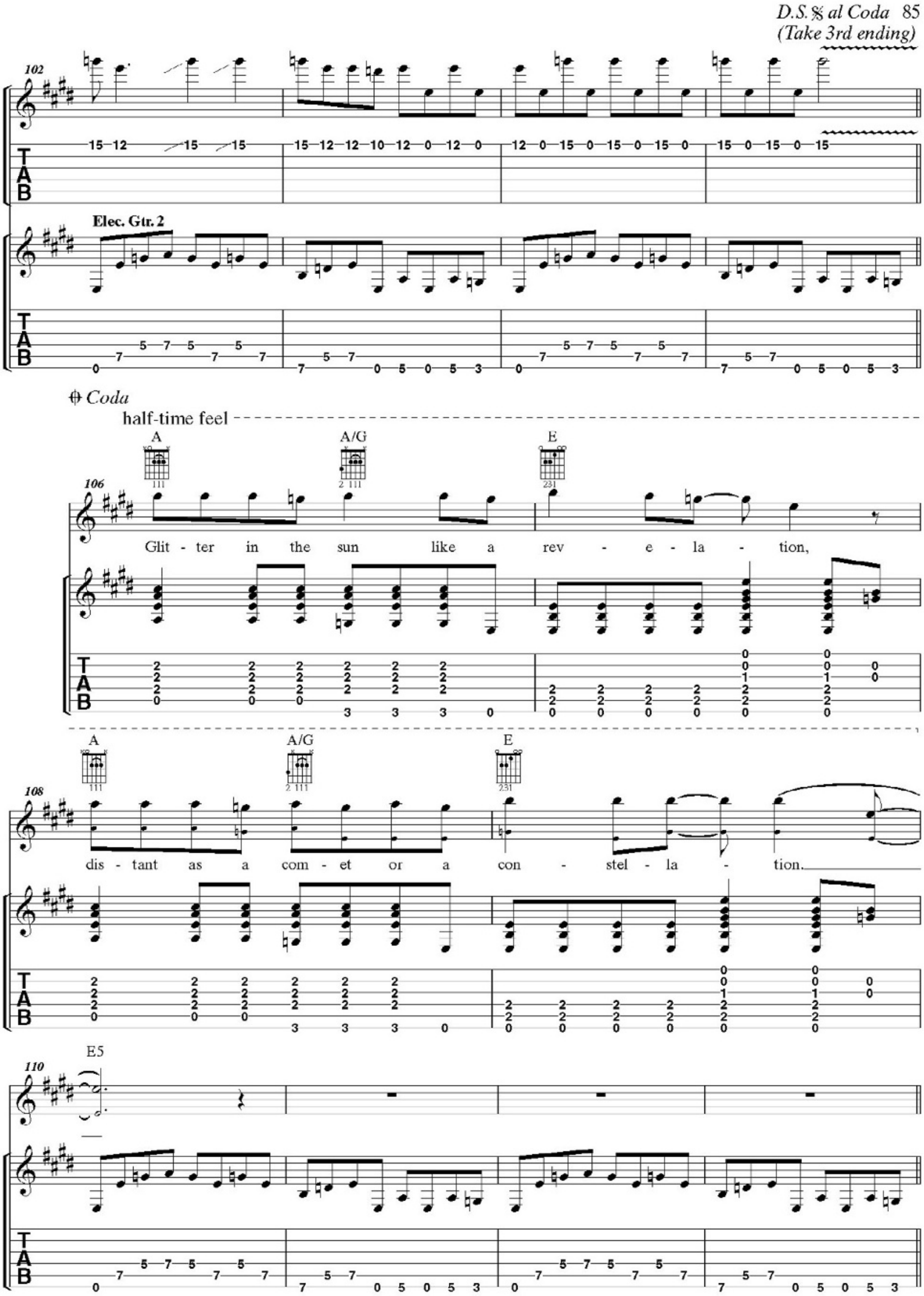
D.S. 𝄋 al Coda 85
(Take 3rd ending)
102
Elec. Gtr. 2
𝄌 Coda
half-time feel
A
A/G
E
106
Glit - ter in the sun like a rev - e - la - tion,
A
A/G
E
108
dis - tant as a com - et or a con - stel - la - tion.
E5
110

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 8

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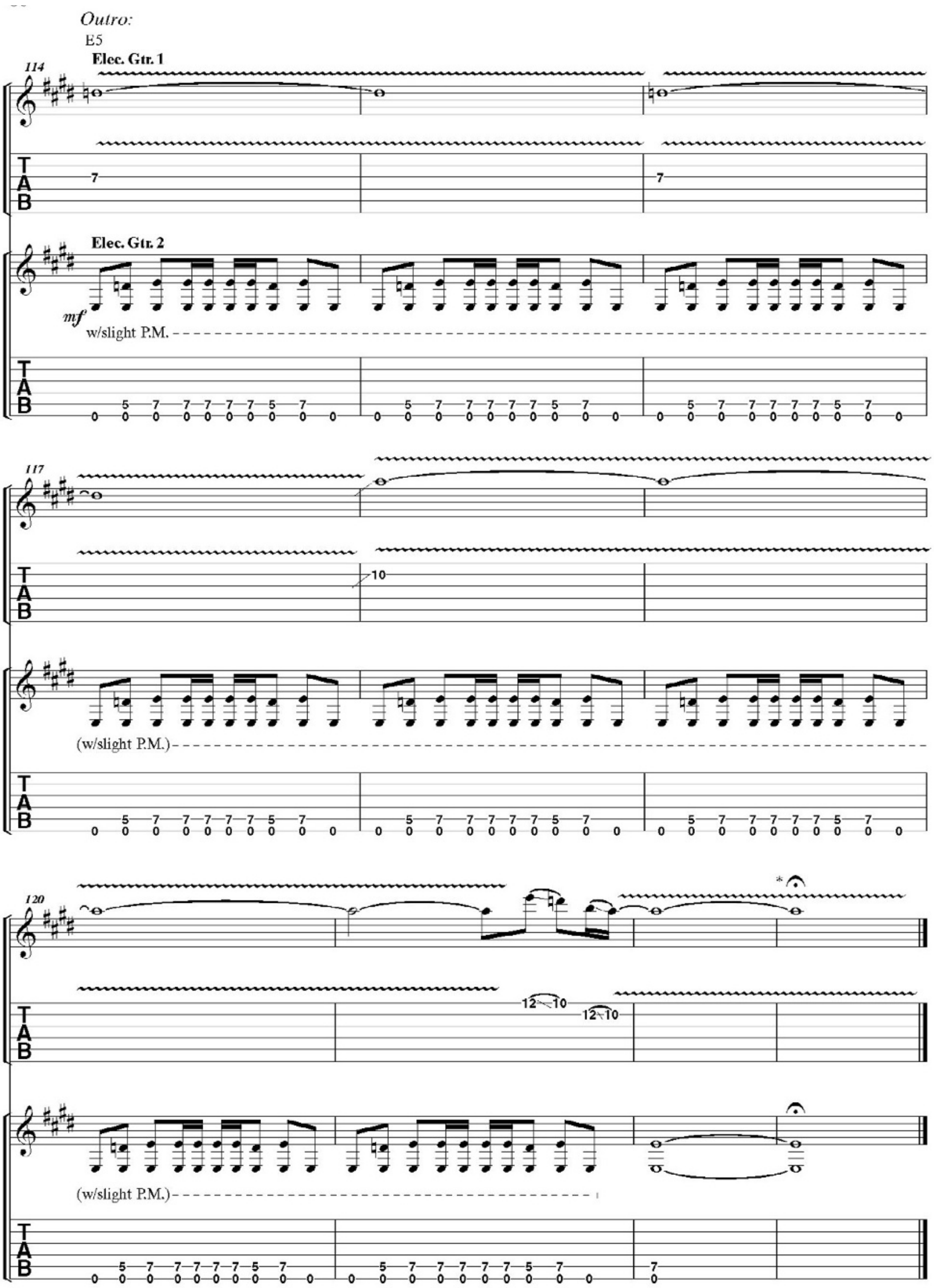
Outro:
E5
Elec. Gtr. 1
114
T
A
B
Elec. Gtr. 2
mf
w/slight P.M.
117
(w/slight P.M.)
120
*

Seven Cities of Gold - 9 - 9

*Cont. random slide noises to fade.

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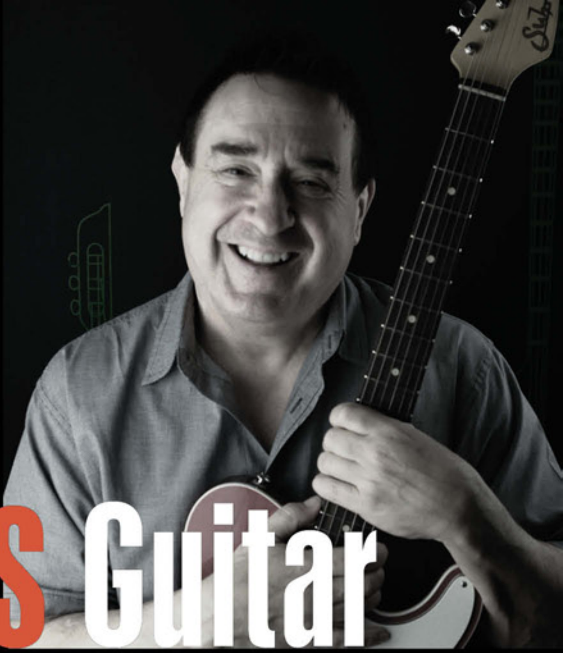

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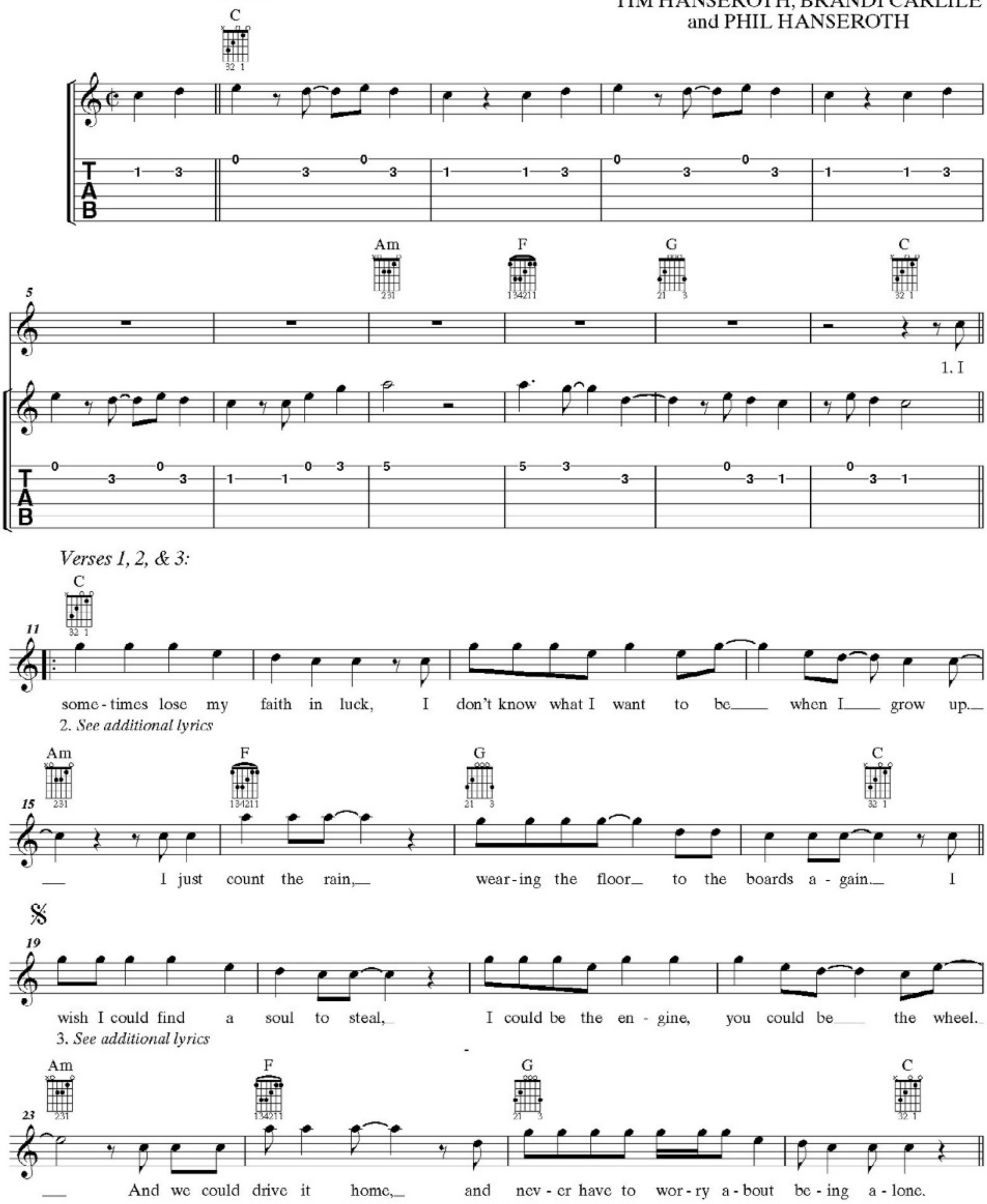
52 Video Lessons Featuring 210 Minutes of Instruction

HARD WAY HOME

Words and Music by
TIM HANSEROTH, BRANDI CARLILE
and PHIL HANSEROTH

Moderately in 2 ♩ = 94

Intro:


C
Am
F
G
C
1. I
Verses 1, 2, & 3:
some-times lose my faith in luck, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up.
2. See additional lyrics
I just count the rain, wear-ing the floor to the boards a - gain. I
wish I could find a soul to steal, I could be the en - gine, you could be the wheel.
3. See additional lyrics
And we could drive it home, and nev - er have to wor - ry a - bout be - ing a - lone.

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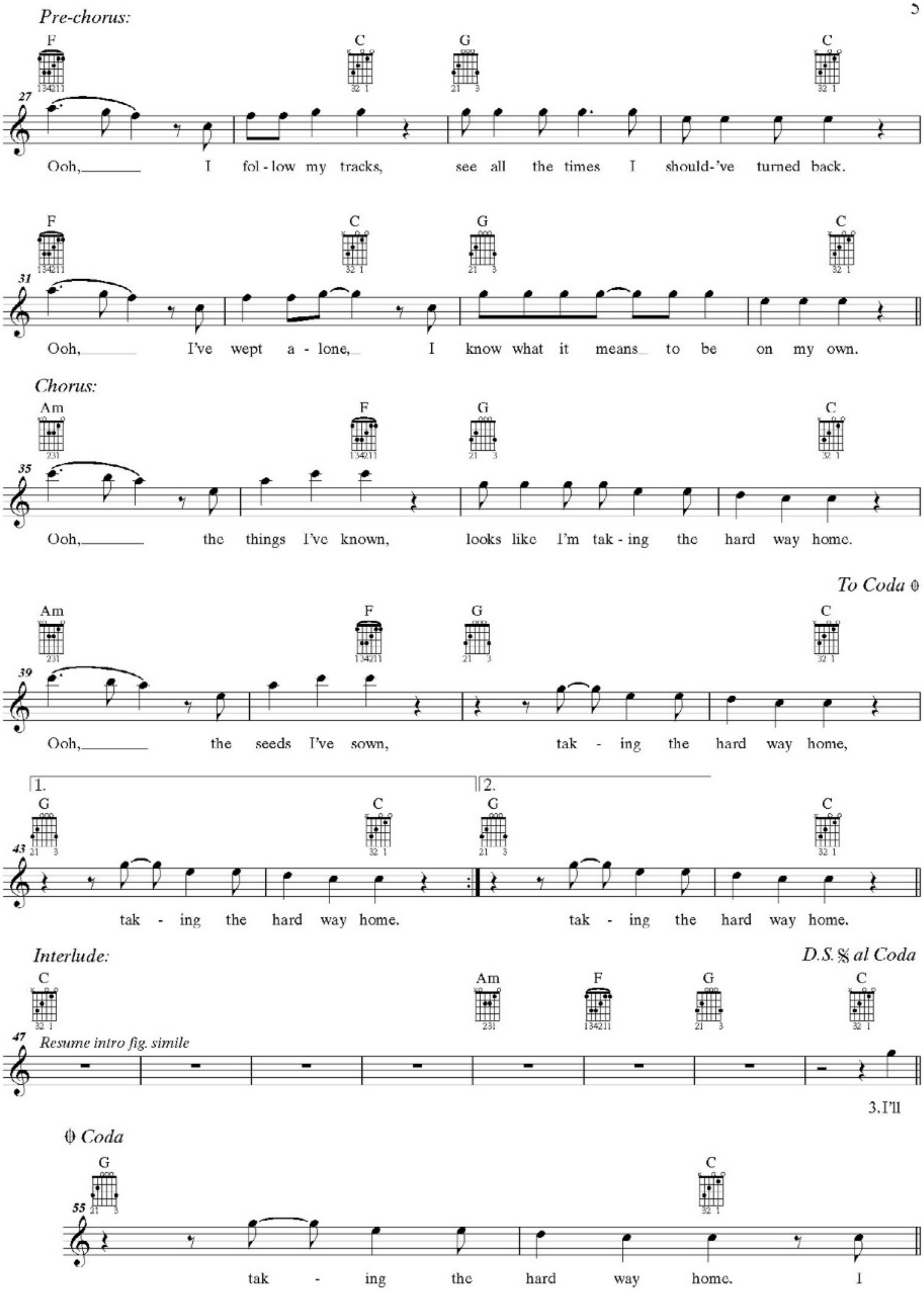
Pre-chorus:
F C G C
27
Ooh, I fol - low my tracks, see all the times I should - 've turned back.
F C G C
31
Ooh, I've wept a - lone, I know what it means to be on my own.
Chorus:
Am F G C
35
Ooh, the things I've known, looks like I'm tak - ing the hard way home.
To Coda
Am F G C
39
Ooh, the seeds I've sown, tak - ing the hard way home,
1. 2.
G C G C
43
tak - ing the hard way home. tak - ing the hard way home.
Interlude:
D.S. al Coda
C Am F G C
47
Resume intro fig. simile
3. I'll
Coda
G C
55
tak - ing the hard way home. I

Hard Way Home - 3 - 2

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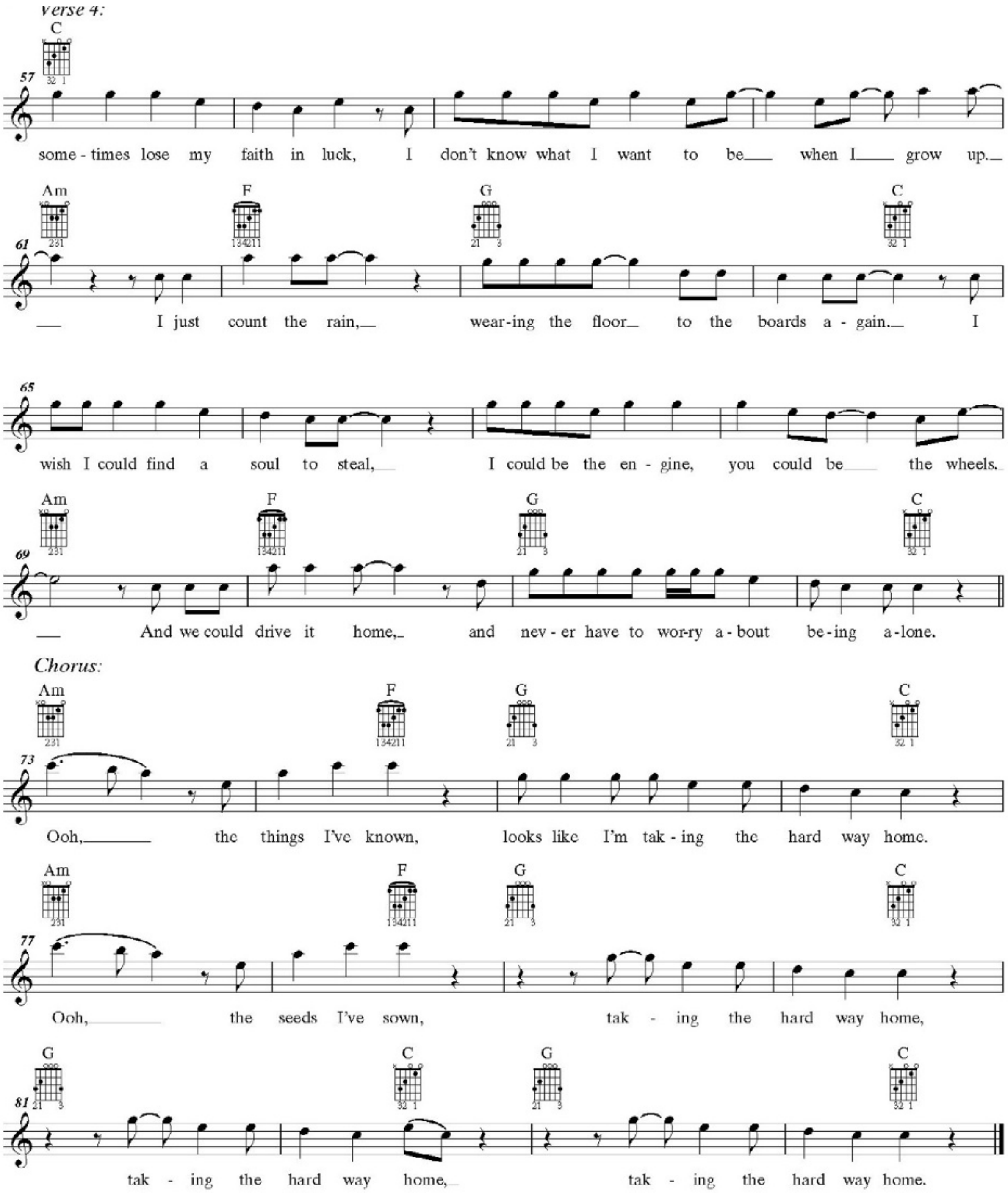
Verse 4:
C Am F G
some-times lose my faith in luck, I don't know what I want to be___ when I___ grow up.___
___ I just count the rain,___ wear-ing the floor___ to the boards a-gain.___ I
wish I could find a soul to steal,___ I could be the en-gine, you could be___ the wheels.___
___ And we could drive it home,___ and nev-er have to wor-ry a-bout be-ing a-lone.
Chorus:
Ooh,___ the things I've known, looks like I'm tak-ing the hard way home.
Ooh,___ the seeds I've sown, tak-ing the hard way home,
tak-ing the hard way home,___ tak-ing the hard way home.

Verse 2:
Never did learn how to follow the rules,
I never was good at sleeping while the moon was full.
I'll just lie and burn,
Wreck my mind while the planet turns

I sometimes wish I could start again,
I'd try and do the right thing every now and then.
I'd step in line,
That's what I'd do if I could turn back time.
(To Pre-chorus:)

Verse 3:
I'll tell you how I want to live,
Forget about the take, forget about the give.
I want to leave this town,
Fake my death and never be found.
(To Pre-chorus:)

Hard Way Home - 3 - 3

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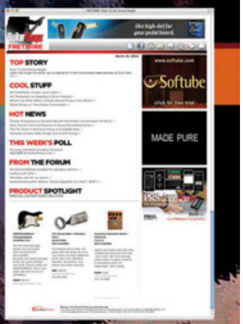

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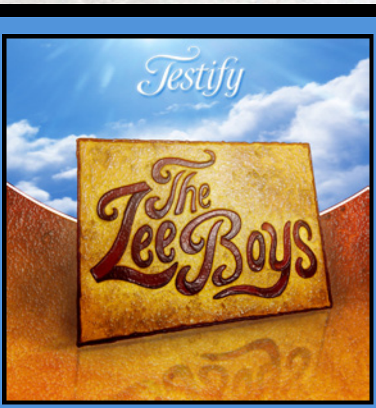

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